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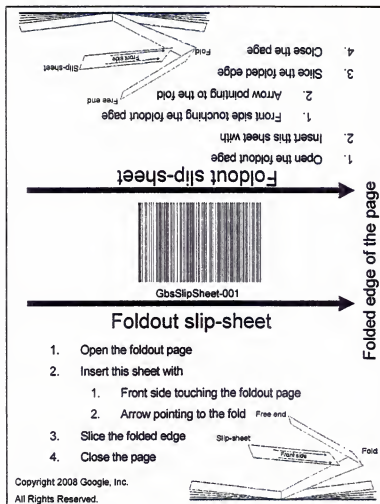
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Volume Five Number Two

May 1989

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MY SATANIC VERSES

The Ayatullah put a \$5 million bounty on my head after my Nick Cave story. [By John Leland. 98](#)



TOP SPIN

"Assassination is the most extreme form of censorship."

—George Bernard Shaw

I have been an admirer of the work of Salman Rushdie for some time. I believe *Midnight's Children* (1981) and *Shame* (1983) are two of the finest novels written in English in this or any century. Fantastic, surreal, apocalyptic, the novels vividly evoke the tragic history of the Indian subcontinent in modern times. The locales of the novels follow Rushdie's personal begira from the Bombay of *Midnight's Children*, where he was born in the year a partitioned India achieved independence from Britain, to the Pakistan of *Shame*, where his Muslim family later moved. The central theme of the novels—the plight of much of mankind in the face of inter-religious hatred, political oppression and economic deprivation—transcends geography. And Rushdie's prose reads, literally as well as figuratively, like a dream.

When I heard that a new Rushdie novel had just been published in the United States (after receiving critical praise in England), I rushed to my favorite bookstore and bought a copy. The principal locale of *The Satanic Verses* is England, where Rushdie has lived since 1965; the novel portrays the feelings of rootlessness and the racial discrimination experienced by his fellow immigrants. The principal characters are a former Indian film star and a hopeless Anglophile who, this being Rushdie country, survive the destruction by terrorists of an airliner 29,000 feet above the English Channel and float to earth, metamorphosed respectively as the Archangel Gibreel (Gabriel) and the Devil the latter complete with horns, goat's hooves and enlarged phallus). It was not long after I read the novel that some of the very Pakistani immigrants Rushdie writes about with evident brotherhood were burning his books in the English industrial city of Bradford. Meanwhile, the novel was banned in most Muslim countries. Finally, the Ayatullah issued his "death sentence," urging the faithful to murder the hapless author.

The sequences of *The Satanic Verses* which Muslims have found offensive describe the dreams (nightmares?) of a mentally unbalanced Gibreel, recasting in surrealist form events in the life of Mohammed. It is understandable that

devout followers of Islam, reading these sections literally, would be offended. Sophisticated readers, Muslim or otherwise, understanding the uses of fantasy, dreams and the purposeful transmutation of reality in a work of the imagination, would perceive the book quite differently. Of course, these are the more likely readers of a Rushdie novel.

A Western parallel to *The Satanic Verses* is *The Last Temptation of Christ*, by Nikos Kazantzakis, a novel which was made into a film which many devout Christians found similarly offensive. Groups of protesters picketed the film, thereby exercising their First Amendment rights as justifiably as the author and filmmakers had exercised theirs. But no religious or political official called for anyone's death.

The great religions of the world have survived for centuries because of their inherent appeal, at the most profound spiritual level, to their adherents. Thus the most astute comment on the Rushdie affair was made by the great South African novelist, Nadine Gordimer: "Has ever a book been the pretext for such frenzy? Surely Islam cannot be threatened by the fantasy of a novel."

Rushdie's works are aimed not against religion, but against political repression clothed in ecclesiastical garb. And it is those forces which have fanned and exploited the furor over *The Satanic Verses*. In *Shame*, Rushdie paints a chilling picture of the human misery which resulted when Mohammed Zia ul-Haq subverted a democratic constitution and established a personal dictatorship by reviving religious fundamentalism, turning Pakistan into a theocratic state. After the recent bloody riots in Islamabad, Zia's successor and former adversary, Benazir Bhutto, pointedly asked: "Was the agitation really directed against this book, which has not been read, sold or translated in Pakistan, or was it a protest by those who lost the election [and wish] to destabilize the process of democracy?"

In Iran, the Ayatullah's action was a demagogic tactic to divert the public's attention from the aftermath of the disastrous Iran-Iraq war and to send a clear warning to more moderate Iranian officials advocating liberalization of the regime. One of these high officials, Ayatullah Montazeri, had previously publicly lamented the fact that "people



Top: American terrorists—the Ohio Seven (L-R): Sean Looman, Barbara Cruz-Looman, Richard Williams, Carol Manning, Tom Manning, Pat Gros Lovaesser and Ray Lovaesser.



Bottom: Mino, a singer of the new Arab musical defiance—Raï.

in the world have gained the idea that our business in Iran is just murdering people." Days later, Khomeini issued Rushdie's death warrant.

At one level, the Rushdie affair is another episode in the long battle for free speech, the bane of tyrants. There are historical antecedents: Voltaire was also reviled for his anti-clericalism and ultimately made his home near the border of France and Switzerland, so that he could anticipate police action from either state. But there is a darker, more menacing tone to the Rushdie affair. The Ayatullah has married international terrorism to the suppression of free expression. The

world must express—and act upon—its sense of outrage as forcefully as it has to other, purely physical forms of terrorism. President Bush should have spoken out immediately; his statement when it was ultimately issued lacked real conviction as well as teeth. Great Britain's initial reaction was superb; but then it sought to mollify Khomeini by publicly criticizing the book, a strategy which had to fail. If it is to remain such, the "civilized" world must reject this affront to the most fundamental human rights, the right to live and the right to create.

—David H. Horowitz

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POINT BLANK

Edited by Robin Reinhardt



There Is A Light

For years I've played the Birthday Party albums loudly and showed stupid peo-

ple their lyric sheets and received cool receptions. For subsequent years I've played every Nick Cave record daily and pompously espoused their virtues and still lunkheads lumped him with gloom sludge and called him some unwanted punk poet type. I was convinced that the fella should be counted amongst the ranks of the great junk culture/mock anti-heroic giants of the day (Waits, Beefheart, Hasil Adkins). And then there it was, right where Pat Benatar and Madonna had once been, on the cover of SPIN (February). And within was an article that was perceptive and fairly apologetic. Wow. Maybe now I can relax a little.

Patrick Indiana
San Francisco, CA

If John Leland had checked his facts somewhere besides the back cover of *King of the Delta Blues Singers* he would have known that Robert Johnson died at the age of 27. Oddly, this information is readily available in Robert Palmer's *Deep Blues*. Robert Johnson did more than sell his soul and get murdered; he created a body of work which has stood for over 50 years. It remains to be seen whether Nick Cave will be remembered in 15.

Paul Aarstad
Bloomington, IN

I Am What I Am

Thanks for your insightful article on Edie Brickell and the New Bohemians

[March]. It was nice to read a story about talented musicians and their music by Michael Corcoran, who, when he lived in Austin, was always a "conspiracy" of fiery red hair, flaming tattoos and faded jeans that conformed to the kind of hulge that men "fret over" but women "just accept as part of God's universe."

Tamara Thompson
Austin, TX

Saint Julian

Just a short note to thank you for writing about Julian Cope [March]. Having been a fan since the days of The Teardrop Explodes, I was really glad to see this guy get in print! With so many "stars" presenting more hair-style than musical style, Julian Cope stands out as



Stoli. For the purist.

an artist with intelligence and humor. My thanks to Christian Logan Wright for giving him the chance to show himself as more than some pop puffball.

David Stone
Northampton, MA

Despite The Hype

So far the least annoying thing I've seen on R.E.M.'s in SPIN has been that cartoon [Spins, December]. Yea Little Suttly! I'm glad that someone out there is more interested in R.E.M.'s music than their public image or their bank account. I was glad to see Little Suttly back in the issue.

Denise Carter
New York, NY

I am writing to give praise to one of your writers for consistently giving attention to such record labels as Wax Trax, 4AD and Nettwerk, and to such bands as Skinny Puppy, Revolting Cocks and Laibach. It's about time these labels and bands got recognition for innovation, originality and realism. For once music that's not 100-percent money oriented but a mixture of truth and uncompromising security. A foreshadowing view of the future whether you like it or not.

Thank you Staci Bonner for being as gutsy as the music itself.

DJ Slave
Paris New York Niteclub
Huntington Station, NY

Get The Facts

I was never a fucking waitress, you guys [Flash, March]. You should check before you make a headline out of it.

Suzanne Vega
New York, NY

P.S. I was a receptionist.

Split Decision

Thank you for the article on Echo & the Bunnymen [January]. It is the most depressing thing in the world to know that the best band there ever was broke up. Echo may not have had billions of fans, but who said you need the world watching you to be the best thing there ever was. I hope they get smart, forget their stubborn opinions and get back together.

Laura Contreras
Pasadena, CA

Oulja Woes

Thank you a thousand times for printing my letter to Elvis—the one about the cat [February]. I have to admit, I was just a little disappointed that The King had no direct answer to my question, but it does warm the cockles of my heart to know that The King, wherever he is, knows about my worries. I heartily thank you for finding space for my small contribution.

Keith Dawson
Brooklyn, NY

Rock Against Apathy

The situation in Belfast and Derry is not a new one. It is one that I have long wished would receive some unbiased news coverage, so I was surprised to see the article in SPIN [January]. How long until a real solution is found, until you can get a fair trial in the North? Until the Pogues can be broadcast over the BBC? Until people don't get a 6 o'clock knock on their door? Or will it be until the benefit concert is done, until the video is made, until the color photos get to be repetitive and it isn't cool to be concerned about that anymore?

Christie Marie Schaefer
Kentfield, CA

I Spit On Your Grave

John Leland's article "Industrial Dance Music" should have been titled "Trendy Dance Music Starring Al Jourgensen" [Singles, March]. How can Wax Trax Records be labeled "industrial?" Leave the title to the bands that deserve it—Nurse With Wound, Ancient Hula and Current 93. Leave bands such as Skinny Puppy and Nitzer Ebb out of it. Chris and Casey will spit on your grave.

Kirsten Aalfs
Rock Hill, SC

Fair Trade

Okay, here's the deal—we'll give the American psychiatric community Axl Rose and Sam Kinison if they'll give us Roky Erickson and Daniel Johnston [March].

Michael Heath
College Park, MD

ERRATA

Missed photo credit (September 1988)—page 56 by Robert Lewis.



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FLASH

Edited by Christian L. Wright

Above the Watermark

Enya, traditional Irish pop siren, puts work first.

"Anthing other than music is irrelevant to me," says Enya, whose US debut LP *Watermark* cuts through dense hopelessness with a mysterious longing for return to a better day, an exploration of nature's tools—time and space—to rescue mankind from its fall from grace, without ever approaching modern topics. The tiny—just about five-foot-tall—24-year-old Irish woman, sometimes swathed in white chiffon, has overtaken the international charts with her unconventional single "Orinoco Flow," a song steeped in Wagnerian drama and Rilke angst with almost meaningless lyrics. "It is not that I am shielding myself or guarding myself," she says. "Enya has had no time to think about issues. I have no boyfriends, no hobby. Everything has had to be put aside while I have worked on my music. I believe you have only one chance to make a life and to do your work. That I have put first. That is why there is *Watermark*."

Before beginning her solo career, Enya joined Clannad—an acoustic band of Irish pop traditionalists made up of her uncles, cousins, brothers and sisters—leaving behind a sheltered convent school in her hometown of Donegal in Northern Ireland. She'd been trained in classical composition and piano and had many innovative ideas; so she quickly became bored with her secondary role in the group. Encouraged by soundman Nicky Ryan, Enya pushed for a more modern direction until both were asked to leave. Enya moved in with Nicky, his wife Roma and their two children, where she found the support of a new musical family and a large empty room with a piano.

"I sat there day after day playing classical pieces," Enya remembers. "I have such admiration and respect for melody. I just played and played and listened until I began to write." Roma, who writes the English lyrics with Enya, saw pictures in her head while listening and then recorded eight original compositions and sent them to Hollywood. In 1985, David Putnam commissioned Enya to write the music for the film "The Frog Prince." "So we were all able to eat and I was allowed to stay in my studio."

Enya does not, however, want to be categorized as a studio machine producing music. "Almost all the music is played by me. It is recorded in real time. This is how we keep the music human. When we will perform live, which I look forward to later this year, a real choir will sing with me as I play my instruments. This is my tradition. And I sing many songs in Irish because Irish is the language of my home and my friends. It is a language that expresses feeling much more directly than English."

In expression as in art, Enya has a beauty and a strength that have risen from the bleakest landscape. If Jung had written a screenplay about the human quest for wholeness, to be directed by Vanessa Redgrave, Enya would compose the soundtrack.

—Jim Fournat

Heavy Rotation

Staff Selections

The Buck Pets, *The Buck Pets* (Island) In a frenzied fit, hard-edge guitars rip through drowning vocals. A bit young, a bit naive, but then again, a lot can be said for the candor of youth. (Reinhardt)

Diesel Park West, *Shakespeare Alabama* (EMI) Nicking 60s purity and 70s volume, blending and layering guitar, spitting no one else's words from an abandoned warehouse in no man's land (somewhere between London and Liverpool), Diesel Park West strips down to let the inside out. (Wright)

Dirty Dozen Brass Band, *Voodoo* (CBS) Sounding less like the New Orleans marching band they are, the DD88 waltz the time away as if life were an eternal cocktail hour. Besides, Screamin' Jay Hawkins just isn't good background music. (Wright)

Extreme, *Extreme*, (A&M) If originally was a sin, these Boston boys would go straight to heaven, where you know they'd be a hell of a band. Twice removed from the sources, the riffing solos like *Soul Asylum* while the strutting hooks and greasy sounds sound like *Poison*. It's a piece of garbage, so it doesn't stink at all. (Levy)

The House of Love, *The House of Love* (Relativity/Creation) Blending rage and melancholy in perfect proportion, the songs let you drift in and out of consciousness while gripping you at the core of your frustration. (Reinhardt)

John Cougar Mellencamp, *Big Daddy*, (PolyGram) Mellencamp's best, most confident album to date—poetically socially conscious and pure rock 'n' roll in seamless combination. (Guccione, Jr.)

Love and Rockets, *Motorcycle EP* (Beggars Banquet) Raceway sampling and "me and my motorcycle are free" may seem a bit daff, 'til the final fatal collision which is, of course, absolute liberation. Mocking Harley romanticism while screaming down the motorway, warm in black leather. Dreamy. (Wright)

Madonna, *Like a Prayer* (Warner) Against Pepsi's state-of-the-art global marketing putsch (check the juxtaposition of Madonna's makeup with the African guy's for the tribalization of the Pepsi generation), the music tends to get lost. Which is a shame, because especially on the two collaborations with Prince, she soars to conquer. Makes you remember that in her roots, the music was all that mattered. (Leland)

Ten City, *Foundation* (Atlantic) A house vocal group smart enough to mess with both traditions, Ten City translates the gospel into a kind of secular shantihand: these mantras of monogamy are as sexy as they are inspirational. And that beat feels just like disco. Producer Marshall Jefferson's piano drives these grooves like a truck. (Leland)

Tammy Wynette, *Next to You* (Epic) The material here is just adequate, but the arrangements—focused schmaltz, as opposed to overwhelming schmoltz—set her free to do emotional damage. She can still make a train cry at 50 paces. (Leland)



The Prince of Paramus

Rocco Primavera croons like Sinatra but has better swizzle sticks and a killer coif.

"When this guy sings, diamonds come out of his mouth," says Ira Meltzer, musical director of Rocco Primavera and the New Jersey Nightingales. During a recent performance at US Blues in Manhattan, the many fans' outstretched hands prove it.

I've been lucky enough to arrange an interview with the Man who, since his singing debut in April '88, has been turning downtown club aficionados upside down by crooning his way into their bitter hearts and their slow-dancing shoes.

Rocco's primping before the show, in his modest yet elegant dressing room. "You're not a bad looking broad—a little skinny maybe," he says looking at me for the first time between hairspraying his enormous chestnut pompadour and adorning himself with heavy gold chains and rings. "I'm glad they sent a broad. I love all the beautiful ladies."

"Where were you born, Rocco?" I ask as he dons a crushed velvet jacket, garish long collar resting on wide lapels. "How did your singing career get started?"

"I was born in Paramus, New Jersey—New Jersey being the home of Ol' Blue Eyes, Mr. Sinatra. Ever

since I can remember my family knew I was a great singer and someday I would be doin' it professionally." Rocco stops short, grabbing my hand. "You don't mind—I don't say much about my family, 'cause of kidnapping and ransom and stuff. I like to keep them private."

I nod in agreement and intrigue, but continue the questioning, mostly about his favorite songs and why he's chosen material only from the 40s, 50s and 60s.

"Some of my favorites are songs that I currently do, 'Witchcraft' and 'Ol' Black Magic' by Louis Prima and Keely Smith. They were husband and wife. They were nuts, man! They would go onstage with chickens and goats and stuff while they sang. But beautiful songs, you know? To me, these songs are the classics. You got the songs Mr. Sinatra sings, you got the songs we sing. These are the real American folk songs."

"Every morning I get up," says Rocco, lighting a cigarette. "Have my orange juice, my vitamin pill and light the candles in my shrine to Frank Sinatra and Jerry Vale. I sing about the romantic side of this country, the time when this great country of ours ruled. You got your blues in the South, but this here's the blues, too. White people blues, so to speak."

Then there are the women. "I like Ella," says Rocco, throaty. "Judy Garland. Now, I love Ms. Garland. I mean, here's a broad who can put away a pint of scotch, smoke three packs of Marlboros, fool around with some boys in the back, go onstage and then do the best show you have ever heard in your life."

Suddenly, in a rush of giggles and platinum hair, Tish and Snookie, the New Jersey Nightingales, appear. Rocco, gentleman that he is, stands as they enter the room. These girls have knockout figures, hour-glasses accentuated by tight plush purple dresses and white feather boas.

"How did you get together with Rocco?" I ask Tish and Snookie while they make final costume adjustments.

"We had been reading about Rocco all the time in the Paramus newspapers," says Snookie, cocking her head and smiling. "It was always our dream to one day be Rocco's girls."

The house manager comes down and tells Rocco Primavera—who regularly plays New York venues, and bigger shows in Atlantic City—that it's time to go on. But first, I grab onto Rocco's sleeve and ask him about personal integrity. He smiles a disarming smile.

"You either got it or you don't," he says. "I was raised on this kind of music and to me, it's like going to church. Nowadays you can change your nose, you can even change your sex nowadays. But you can't get integrity. It has to be in you, and you gotta love what you do."

Then people will love it too. As Rocco Primavera breaks into song, the audience is silent except for the tinka-tink of a swizzle stick in the cocktail of a bygone era.

—Jennifer Houlton

"First the cinematic language was eaten up by the language of television, which began to grow like a cancer cell inside of movies. Now it's the language of commercials."

—Wim Wenders

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100711



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Boston Pops: Music from
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Strikes Back, more. (Philips
DIGITAL)
100582 Tracy Chapman
Fast Car, Talkin' Bout A
Revolution, etc. (Elektra)



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100404 Neilson: The
Decade Masters, Vol. 1
Goldwyn's Candlewick, Clair
de Lune, many more. (MCA)
100033 Robert Palmer:
Heavy Nova + Singing
Machine, More Than
Ever, etc. (EMI)



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154125 The Best Of
Sleazy Dan: Decade
14 hits. (MCA)
104871 Supertramp:
Classics 14 Greatest
Hits! The Logical Song,
Give A Little More, etc.
(A&M)
144875 The Judds:
Greatest Hits + (RCA)
115556 Pinocchio Vivaldi,
The 4 Seasons - Simon
Standage, violin, etc.
(Acustic DIGITAL)
144780 Cinderella: Long
Cold Winter + Opus Road,
Don't Know What You Got,
more. (Mercury)
144875 The Judds:
Greatest Hits + (RCA)



182522

270106 An Evening With
Louis Armstrong (GNP
Crescendo)
262889 Virgin Road: The
Digital Fax + Organ music
by Bach, others.
cleridigital DIGITAL



115311

204888 Perelman:
Bravura, Violin Sonatas
(Angel DIGITAL)
120784 20 Great Love
Songs Of The 50s & 60s,
Vol. 1 - (Laurie)



170348

100675 Steve Earle:
Copperhead Road (UNI)
134267 Marianne: Mozart,
Overtures - Academy Of St.
Martin. (Angel DIGITAL)



100927

137406 Genesis:
Invisible Touch + (A&G)
163878 Andrie Segovia
Plays Rodrigo, Ponce &
Torroba + Fantasia para un
Genitronismo, Concerto
del Sur, Cantes Of Spain,
(MCA)
100675 Steve Earle:
Copperhead Road (UNI)
134267 Marianne: Mozart,
Overtures - Academy Of St.
Martin. (Angel DIGITAL)



115457

137406 Genesis:
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My Waking Dream

My Bloody Valentine are black sheep grazing the English countryside with the subconscious as their shepherd.

I find that often if I have a dream about something, it seems that, just because I've woken up, I don't feel like it's finished. For example, if you dream that you're in love with somebody, One day you have no opinion of them, then you have this dream that you're in love with them, and you wake up the next day, and you see them and you feel funny, you know what I mean?"

So speaks Kevin Shields, singer, songwriter and staple-gun guitar player for London's My Bloody Valentine. Though the band originally took their name from a "10th rate" Canadian slasher film, their more intimate filmic relative may be "Carnival of Souls," a 60s movie about a woman who dies without knowing it and finds herself trapped in a bizarre midway of lost spirits. *Isn't Anything*, the group's US debut (Relativity), is a bit like a funhouse dream that won't end, like aisles and aisles of *deja vu* distortion. Maybe you've been down this raucous hallway before, maybe you recognize the white-noise chop of ocean waves.

My Bloody Valentine is a dead-right handle, if only because it connects the thorns on the underside of a rose. Typically, Shields and Bilinda Butcher float vocal swoons and lyrics like "Swallow me into your bed" over their own savage guitars, Colm O'Ciosio's nail-pound drums and Deb Googe's thuggish bass. It's a delicious whirl of the sweet and the sonic.

"We find it fairly boring just to play nice guitar sort of stuff," Kevin says. "We have to occasionally, but it doesn't give us any sort of kick. Vocally, we don't really

enjoy shouting and screaming that much. We're not very good at shouting and screaming anyway."

The band recorded most of *Isn't Anything* in a country studio halfway down a valley in Wales, where voices rarely rose above a mutter ("We felt like we were gonna fall asleep all the time"), and the mood was more than a bit somnambulant ("I just don't remember doing some of it, to tell you the truth"). They worked late at night, virtually creating the songs as they went along. The line between inspiration and distraction blurred. . . .

"We were in this valley, O.K., in the middle of nowhere, with like, lots of sheep. But the sheep were incredibly noisy, really horrible. Every time we wanted to sleep, there were thousands of sheep milling about, making really corny sheep noises. I mean, sheep sound like people imitating sheep. But that wasn't as bad as the jets. About two hundred feet above our heads. It'd be like silence, and all of a sudden there'd be virtually a sonic boom of noise, like an explosion above your head."

That these terrors of the pasture would torture such a deceptively romantic, lilyingly vicious gang as My Bloody Valentine proves the efficiency of our poetic justice system. The band hopes to continue their waking dream when they play the US for the first time this summer. As for future albums, maybe they'll go about things differently next time.

"I dunno," mumbles Shields, "We might try and write it before we go into the studio."

—Pat Blashill

A B-Boy's Guide To Spring

When does cry, b-boys break out chilling gear.

This is the time of year when you got to have somethin' funky to wear! 'Cuz the girls ain't gonna stop if you got L.A. Gear! These days everyone's a critic & if you ain't wit it, den forget it.

One of the biggest sellers last year, the Gap is expected to have an incredible spring & summer line in. But hold up: Nautica, which is duh newest shop on the block, might just knock the Gap off the map! As a matter of fact, with their funky flavors of passion fruit & pastelz, Nautica will be duh swing 4 the spring. They don't close until 10 tunts, so I got time tuh shop & still catch a flik, know what I'm sayin'. Money? It's Friday nite 'n I ain't goin' out like dat, or maybe I'll jet to the clubhouse, see who 'sup. Yeah, that's what I'll do.

'Tis the season to have parties, concerts & relationships. Finding Mr. & Ms. right is, to most, the highlight of spring vacation. We dok griz on trains, buses, libraries, beaches & the boulevard. Females—check us out in bars, clubs, game rooms, shoppin' malls & Volvos. Hey! It's only right to see whatcha gettin' foist! Wit some fly gear & waves in ya hair, you got it made—Wayne.

So to all those who have found the one they love, congratulations. But to y'all important men, who can't get it up—"Tuft Luck!" Go get a wind-up or blow-up! You know the type, they go tuh jamz & fight to release obvious tension, instead of tokin' their plastic girl to Great Adventure. They roam thru the jam, slam dancin' & freestyllin', hittin' anybody insite. At least in the spring you can see who's hittin' ya 'cuz the jam's outside. Coney Island is the spot for fried chicken & fly women, ya knowwhut I'm sayin'? Not! "Just tell us what's in this spring." Travel Fox is in like Flynn. Yeah, an Quaker Oats is still king & Jeepz is the move to swing in. Oh, yeah, an cheese makes my ball ring. SPIN is for the spring & just plain disin't is my thing!

—Bänz Malone



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Britain's Political Crisis

Crisis—a comic book with an agenda and a brain.

It's the year 2000, do you know where your children are? According to *Crisis*, Britain's newest comic, they could be working for the MultiFoods Conglomerate to help spread the "good word" about pesticides in the third world. Then again, they could be simply kicking back and enjoying *Remember Chakra*, "an everyday tale of nuns, cosmetics, and death by acupuncture" in which nuns from two rival religious orders fight for advertising rights on the image of Christ.

Crisis is not the usual comic fraught with superheroes and supervillains, nor some zany spoof whose snide sarcasm is as posturing as it is unprincipled. Yet, as the writers and illustrators know, being funny can also mean being serious, and part of the comic's success lies in its ability to mix lurid and laughable visions of the future with images of current social and economic injustice.



However, *Crisis* can take itself a little too seriously. While the satire dispels some of the pretentious solemnity that usually accompanies European Amerophobia and snobism, one does get the feeling that the authors have read *The Ugly American* once too often. Pat Mills, one of the *Crisis* authors, claims the scenarios in his stories are not made up. But he may be reaching with the idea of the English Liberation Army attempting to dislodge England from its place as the 51st state of the USA.

Each issue begins with a time line illustrating the gradual weakening and conscious enslavement of third world countries at the hands of Western corporations. In "Third World War," the unemployed young men and women of developed countries are drafted into a Corporate Army under the aegis of "Freemaid." Dos and dads intact, the army takes on the poor peasantry of the third world in an effort to convince them of the benefits of pesticides and the corporate good, ending support for the guerrilla war in the region. (One effort to "win the hearts and minds" of the peasants is to give them free televisions with satellite dishes so they can watch commercials for things like, "Wonder burgers—the hamburger with no calories. Go on, eat more than one.")

"The New Statesman," the second story, illustrates life on the other side of the economic world—the United States—as an unscrupulous group of special police track down an equally unscrupulous religious leader named Phoenix who seeks the Presidency. It is a scary, emotional and at times fantastic portrait of a world ruled by large organizations and the DNA-altered humans who police it.

The success of *Crisis* is more the reflection than the exception to the rule for comics. Published by Fleetways Publications and spun-off from *2000AD*, *Crisis* reflects the graphic and mainstream development of the politicization of comics.

On this side of the Atlantic, the British comics headhunted by both DC and Marvel have influenced the trend toward more realism and politics in American comics. Additionally, political institutes and think tanks in the US have begun comics as a vehicle for expressing their own ideas or political agenda. However, the rise of adult comics in the mainstream has been hampered by corporate fears of controversy. The initial success of *Crisis* aroused the interest of DC Comics, which originally picked up the option for sales in America. But Warner Communications, DC's parent, apparently did not want the controversy and possible litigation that *Crisis*'s vision of "Third World War" might provoke. Don't be discouraged; *Crisis* will soon be published in the US by Quality Comics as graphic novels.

Does this mean the English Liberation Army might take on Captain America?

—R.E. Nadelson



More Than TV

Belgian industrialists Front 242 manipulate the media to communicate.

"We take everything we see and hear in daily life, and try to translate it for the people," says Daniel B. of Belgium's Front 242. Citing "media"—particularly film and TV—as their broadest influence, the band works with the diverse material from Belgian television, which receives channels from nearly 30 different countries. "In Europe, you go 200 kilometers and you're in another country, another culture, another way of being and thinking. We understand German, English, Dutch, French, Spanish, Italian." Indeed, "front" has the same meaning in several different languages; and Front 242 overcomes language barriers while striving to break down communication gaps. "In Belgium, it's very eclectic. People are open to all kinds of music. Music is everywhere—even more than TV."

Front's characteristic danceable harshness, while once unique, is currently widely

used in acid house and rap music. The band concedes that, "It is more difficult to distance ourselves from the others now," but their own "hard sounds are becoming more popular" because of the exposure. "We're doing the same things that we always did, and the response of the people is better." Their Anton Corbijn-directed video "Headhunter" does get MTV play, however infrequent, and concert audiences range from 10- to 40-year-olds, sometimes even older.

In the wake of heavy metal, punk and disco, Front 242 still seeks to unearth "aggressive, violent sounds." In spite of the speech sampling of evangelists and Moammar Khadafi, the band does not adhere to a collective political stance. "You can take it 1,000 ways," they say. "We try to take the clichés around us and turn them into something with a certain color. The color is Front 242."

—Stad Bonner



Escape From The Bollocks

The Wonder Stuff—hedonistic popsters from the Midlands—get up your nose.

The Wonder Stuff would like nothing better than to piss you off. Despite their nasty rep in England, these four groovin' lads from Wolverhampton are an outrageously obnoxious group you'd die to get completely blasted with and then rush the stage at a Rick Astley concert. But, they can be genuinely nice—depending on their mood.

"None of us are into being famous or household names," says drummer Martin Gilks, in spite of the success of the debut album, *The Egg Legged Groove Machine*, and the bedlam in the offices of the British music tabloids. "We just want to keep writing good songs. If we stop writing good songs, we'll pack the band in."

"If you listen to the songs [like "Give Give Give Me More More More" and "It's Yer Money I'm After, Baby"], it's sort of an attitude rather than saying we want it," says Rob Jones aka The Bass Thing. "It's a parody. These songs came at about the same time as when the record company started talking money to us. So the songs say, 'This is what I'm like,' even though it's joking."

"We're not into this for the money, we're into it for the music and that's it," Martin says with a bit more conviction than all those who've said it before him. "They're just loud pop songs that can annoy people at times. That's all."

It seems the Stuffies love annoying everyone, includ-

ing their fans. "I just give them the opportunity to shoot their fucking heads off," says Miles Hunt, lead singer and guitarist, leaning casually back and smirking. "I say, 'You people fucking get right up my nose,' and I just generally give them a hard time. People may say, 'What a nasty piece of work,' but a lot of people see it as humorous and an opportunity to have a good shout."

"I've cringed sometimes at the things that have gone on," admits Malcolm Treece (guitar/vocals), bright orange hair with matching hat gleaming in the sunlight.

"But other times I've cracked up terribly at what's going on between Miles [who'll verbally abuse anyone for a reaction] and the audience. It's hilarious. We've gotten letters saying Miles is a complete jerk, that he spoiled a potentially great night and, I don't know, he probably did. But that's the kind of people we are."

"The stuff we do is my escape from the bollocks," says Miles. "When I look around at our gigs, I see a lot of people with a big grin on their face, shouting and jumping about. They've just gotten out everything that pissed them off." The Wonder Stuff are better than a therapy session, better than a workout and the best part is, they're ascended with no hype, no stunts, just great songs with great choruses, that practically force you to sing along. Now, doesn't that get up your nose?

—Robin Reinhardt

A Very Short Story

In which Lemmy of Motörhead teaches a metal kid not to bite the hand that feeds him.

Don was this college intern of my last job, a pretty average kid. He liked to talk about hanging out and listening to music. He said that Lemmy, leader of the group Motörhead, got his name because he was always asking for money: "Lemme have a five," he'd say. Lemmy's real name, however, is Ian.

Right after the release of Motörhead's "Killed by Death" single, Don and his buddy Rip (as in "Ripride," the Vanom song; his real name is Frank) go to the rock capital of the world, L'Amour—a sweatbox, filled with smoke and spandex—in Brooklyn. They take Rip's mom's car. It's O.K. She knows. Don and Rip are in the front row, they own the front row. Don, the metal-playing DJ for his New Jersey college radio station, got them into the show for free. Rip never has any money. So they're at the Motörhead show, drunk off their asses from cheap beer.

The keys to Rip's mom's car, a tan Ventura with speakers that'd been blown by nonstop heavy metal on the ride to L'Amours, are in Rip's denim jacket. The jacket has an Alice Cooper button on it. About halfway through the show, Rip takes his jacket off. He's too hot. No shit. Maybe he didn't think about being crammed in with a couple hundred other stinky metalheads or how he'd feel after swilling a case of cheap beer. Maybe.

So Rip takes his jacket off and puts it on the stage. Then somebody rips it off, right under his shitfaced nose. After the show, Don and Rip call Rip's sister Cronas (as in the lead



singer of Vanom who Don says she's a dead nigger fat, but her real name is Margorie) to pick them up 'cause Rip lost the keys.

Don and Rip are hanging out at L'Amours, waiting. All of a sudden, Lemmy walks out of the dressing room. Lemmy, god of heaviest metal, says, "What are you guys still doing here?" Like they ever had a good reason to be anywhere.

Rip tells Lemmy about the jacket, and Lemmy, after a few moments of deep thought, reaches into his pocket and pulls out half a chicken sandwich. And he says, "Here. Here's a sandwich. It's pretty good." Then he leaves. Don and Rip eat the sandwich. They eat half a sandwich that's probably been sitting in Lemmy's coat pocket since Detroit. But it's drenched in the sweat and covered with the lint from the pocket of the Metal god. Lemmy. Lemmy of Motörhead.

—Jon Haffer

AMERICA'S POP HERO.



TASTES GREAT.

Tall Tales

Unlike his peers, young author Matt Ruff lets fantasy speak through his pen and for his generation.

Matt Ruff tells lies for a living. Enormous, fanciful, ridiculous, charming whoopers are scattered across the 396 pages of his first novel *Foot On The Hill*. The book, written three years ago when Ruff was a sophomore at Cornell, centers around an optimistic, nearly virginal young writer named Stephen Titus George (or St. George); it's a fantasy consistent with the inner dreams of an underdog and aspiring novelist. "Obviously," says Ruff from his home in Seattle, "George is me in a lot of ways. He's the most autobiographical character in the book." As an author, Ruff can play God, but when he's made a protagonist in a tale not of his own design, when he's *being* written, Ruff explains, "I'm gonna try and rewrite it because why should I sit still and get creamed? That's where the conflict comes from."

This *Foot*'s tale is complicated enough, but not nearly enough to Ruff, who's got so many tales to tell, he can't decide which ones to write. For this novel, he chose five. "There's one story about a dog in search of heaven," he says. "Another about these tiny people who fight an HO-scale war against an army of rats, another about a group of pseudo-punk knights making trouble, another about a Klansman's son trying to escape his heritage. And in the middle you've got Stephen George and his struggle with this Greek god who's decided to interfere with all the other stories to see what mayhem he can create. Greek gods were storytellers who didn't necessarily care too much about your character, and who would kill you off if it was good for the plot. Which is sort of what any storyteller does."

Ruff's strong storytelling sense and use of quick

jumpcuts makes the novel easy to visualize, and he's already heard from Spielberg and Disney reps about movie rights. But Ruff is aware that a novel lasts longer than a dead screenplay on a producer's shelf, so he's taking it slow. Mostly, he can't figure out how to have a bunch of talking dogs and cats on screen without looking cheesy.



Born in New York, the rebellious son of a Lutheran minister, Ruff describes himself as "just a weird kid to begin with. I was always the smart kid in class who wasn't into sports—very, very old story. When I was really little, I was pretty obnoxious about it, but I kind of had that beaten out of me." He went to Stuyvesant in Manhattan, an acknowledged haven for misfits otherwise known as a high school for gifted students. "Stuyvesant had a very large percentage of socially inept and downright weird people. Which was great, because I tend to connect with people who aren't been terribly popular, who are unusual in some way."

Matt Ruff is at work on his second novel *Venus Envy*, not so coincidentally the book George is writing in *Foot On The Hill*. It's got all the trademark complexity of a Ruffian work, including "bad Freudian psychology, a basset hound that climbs walls, a tyrant who stalls a prophecy by hijacking the sun, Jimmy Hoffa. . . ." Unlike his published peers, Ruff is concerned with the world as it is, not simply as it relates to him. "I can't pick up *The New York Times* without seeing something I'd like to use someday," he says. "I've got so many ideas stacked up in my head. I just hope I live long enough to get them out."

—Michael Krumpner

Listen and You Will See

Without trading on his blindness, Jeff Healey put tongue in cheek and titled his album *See the Light*.

Three years ago, when the Jeff Healey Band was making the rounds of Canadian labels, they were told they needed a gimmick. "I mean, here's a good-looking young guy," drummer Tom Stephen is fond of repeating, "who plays the guitar on his lap in a totally unique way—and he happens to be blind. What more of a 'gimmick' did they need?"

"Everybody's got their own gimmick," says Healey. "Sometimes unknowingly. There's no point in playing it up but there's no point in denying it either. The curiosity element probably won't die down until we have two albums out that have sold five million each. Then at least I'll have proven that it's the music that's getting to these people."

Three years ago, Healey, Stephen and bassist Joe Rockman were playing to handfuls of fans at gritty little Toronto blues bars. They broke out locally, toured Canada and sent Stephen to New York to get an American deal. Right away, biz-veteran Clive Davis signed the band to a nine-album deal, giving them better points and more creative control than any Canadian band has ever earned from an American label.

Scouting producers, they sent a video to Jimmy Iovine, who just happened to be



Bob Weiser

reading a screenplay featuring a bar band with a blind lead guitarist. So the Healey Band went to LA, cut a cover-heavy soundtrack, recorded their debut album *See the Light*, then did "Roadhouse" with Patrick Swayze. The movie and the soundtrack are due out this month.

"I had a lot of lines to exchange with Swayze," says Healey, "because our characters are long-time friends. He plays a bouncer who's brought in to clean up this bar and get rid of the bad guys in town. Musically, we covered stuff like Cream's 'White Room' because we were playing a bar band in a seedy little dive. It was like going back to our old days."

Though his sonic histrionics have earned raves from Stevie Ray Vaughan and B.B. King, Healey wants to record songs, not showpieces. "I'm a guitarist but I don't want to make a guitarist's album," he says. "For *See the Light*, I wanted good material, well-performed—something I'll be glad to listen to in 10 years."

—Howard Druckman

You Can't Win

The Real Life of Jack Black, petty thief in the romantic era.

Jack Black was first arrested at the age of 16, when he tried to collect a milk bill at a Kansas City house of love, and got caught in a routine police roundup. For the next 30 years, inspired by Dickens and Hugo and the newspaper accounts of the James Gang, he led a life of petty crime, ushering in the 20th century by hopping freight trains, hiding out, burying stolen money, smoking opium and learning the ethics of a good thief, or Johnson.

His 1926 autobiography *You Can't Win*, recently reprinted by Amok Press, documents America's clumsy transition from the Wild West to the industrial age. Along the way, it introduces some of the most riveting characters in American literature: Salt Chuck Mary, the fence whose na never meant yes; the Sanctioned Kid; Foot-and-a-Half George and dozens of other hoboes and drifters. It essays an era so romantic that even Black, who spent much of it in jail or in hiding, cannot help but romanticize it: "I believe a thief could get more out of a thousand dollars thirty years ago than he could out of five thousand to-day. Living was cheaper, police fewer and less active, shyster lawyers not so greedy and well organized, and the fences and fixers not so rapacious. 'Justice' was not an expense."

In his introduction, William Burroughs admits to lifting characters and situations from *You Can't Win* for his novel, *Junky*, but that isn't the half of it. Part horse opera, part morality play, part crime story, *You Can't Win* is the original great hard-boiled text.

—John Leland



Courtesy Zildjian

The History of the Hi-Hat

Avedis Zildjian mixed heavy metals and supplied the Ottoman Empire's marching band with his cymbals.

If you ever travel to Istanbul, don't mention it to any drummers. They'll plead with you to bring back some easy-to-smuggle item like a 20-inch medium China crash/ride cymbal or the 14-inch matched heavy hi-hats.

The Zildjian family maintained the secret that has made their church bells, chimes and cymbals the global standard of excellence since the 17th century until one night during the age of Aquarius when Mehmet Tander and Agop Tomurcuk peered down from the work-

shop roof and watched Mikael Zildjian mix the magic copper, tin and gold alloy.

Although the story may recall a certain soft drink, it involves neither mass marketing nor advanced technology. Nor is it, despite appearances, about personal betrayal. Learning the metal was a kind of insurance for Mikael's two young employees. They did nothing with it while continuing to work for him for 10 years. Mehmet and Agop still render homage to Mikael, who hired them as apprentices when they were 8, by featuring his

photograph on their 1988 calendar promoting "Istanbul—handmade cymbals from Turkey."

The formula was invented in 1623 by Avedis Zildjian. He supplied the Ottoman Empire's "Mehter Takimi"—the army marching bands which made a lot of noise to frighten the enemy. The instruments forged from the alloy balanced deep ground sounds with subtle one-of-a-kind touch sensibility. Churches specified Zildjian, as did symphony orchestras and marching bands. Jazz, then rock, created a mass market. A number of family members moved to the US where they set up production lines and created advertising campaigns. For a while, handmade Turkish and mass-produced American Zildjians competed. And there was outside competition—Paiste in Switzerland, for example.

Mikael was the last Zildjian to make cymbals by hand in Turkey. When he died in 1978, the shop closed; Mehmet and Agop set up their own operation under the name "Istanbul" after a three-year search for financing. Stringent cost control, cheap labor and the depreciated Turkish lira has kept what would otherwise be an anachronistic, inefficient operation competitive. With 14 employees and a 200-cymbal-a-week capacity, demand far outstrips supply. Other than individual hand-currency factory pickups, there is a six-month lead time for orders.

Basically, customers are jazz drummers. Heavy metal does not require percussive finesse. Mehmet and Agop proudly display their photos taken with the likes of Elvin Jones, Peter Erskine and Billy Hart—all jazz drummers.

Inside the shop, a worker with a long pole served round pieces of metal into a wood-fired furnace, like pizzas. When they had been red-hot for a time, he pulled them out. Asked about timing, Mehmet pointed to his eyes and replied: "Experience. We have no thermostat." In an adjoining room, the metal was hand-hammered. The number of taps and the amount of pressure and spacing of the indentations determine the sound. Asked about quality control, Agop pointed to his ears and said: "We do not need graphic equalizers."

I wondered why they didn't franchise or license or build another oven. They explained that they were living well enough, export business was growing slowly but steadily, they did not want stockholders or foreign partners looking over their shoulders (Paiste made an offer, which they refused), and anyway they were selling quality, not quantity.

Only Mehmet and Agop know both the formula for the alloy and the fine points of hand tooling. I asked how they keep these secrets from enterprising youngsters like they once were. Agop smiled: "We are very careful. We have learned from experience."

—Mike Zuerlein

STRICTLY DREAMSVILLE



"We laugh really hard at the Smiths, like when we listen to their records we're on the floor because they're so intensely hilarious."

—They Might Be Giants

Oh baby, baby, it's a wild world.

Shortly after the Ayatollah Khomeini announced the \$5 million reward for the death of Salman Rushdie, Cat Stevens went public with his support of Khomeini, saying, "The Koran makes it clear that if someone defames the Prophet, then he must die." In spite of this, Stevens's record sales have not been affected. As before, no one's buying them, except foreigners who request them rarely. 10,000 Maniacs' Nadine Merchant, who covered Stevens' "Peace Train," says, "I have no intention of playing that song ever again." Tower Records in LA has an artist-of-the-week tradition and after Cat Stevens's comment, Tower management chose him as artist-of-the-week for a laugh. The manager of Manhattan's Vinylmania record shop says, "People comment when they see the albums, but nobody's buying. They just pick them up, make comments, shake their heads and put them down." Record stores across the country haven't noticed a reaction, though smaller shops (like Rock's In Your Head in New York) have opted not to carry his records. Cat's manager Barry Kraut had no comment. Everyone jump on the peace train.

Talking All That Jazz

All the news that we feel like printing: On January 26, **Bobby Brown** was arrested in Columbus, Georgia, for alleged lewdness on stage. Columbus enacted an ordinance prohibiting "sexually explicit performance on city property" following a 1987 **Beastie Boys** show; apparently, Columbus officials were violated by Bobby's Cuisinart-like pelvis and fined him \$652.00. • **Hope** for a new **Beastie Boys** LP late this month. • **Prince** may be in financial crisis because of disappointing *Lovesexy* sales and the expense of the tour and his many side projects. He's written "Love 89" with **Sheena Easton** for **Patti LaBelle**'s next LP. He's also contributing to the soundtrack and doing the theme for the movie "Batman" (due out this summer), starring **Jack Nicholson** and **Michael Keaton**. Besides playing the Joker, Jack's gonna direct and star in the sequel to "Chinatown" (due out by year's end), and he's asked **Bono** to do the score. • "Depeche Mode 101," a feature film shot during the "Music for the Masses" tour and directed by **D.A. Pennebaker** ("Don't Look Back," "Monterey Pop") is to be released mid-April along with a soundtrack LP. • After two island LPs and a third nearly completed, **Bourgeois Tagg** have split up. But Brent Bourgeois and Larry Tagg have been playing together on sessions for fellow northern Californian **Todd Rundgren**'s forthcoming LP. • **Steve Perry**, ex-lead singer for **Journey**, is working on a solo LP in LA. • New San Francisco band **Q2** features two members of the **Bay City Rollers**. • New **Pogues** album out this month. • After the **Tom Tom Club**'s current US tour, **Chris Franz** and **Tina Weymouth** will go back to the Bahamas to produce another **Ziggy Marley** and the **Melody Makers** LP. Following a **Ziggy Marley** show at Penn State recently, **Ziggy**'s 16-year-old brother **Stephen** was shamelessly scamming babes. When one young lady finally said, "How old are you?" Stephen snapped, "What are you, the police?" • **Gene Loves Jezabel** release their third LP this summer. • As the **Juice Crew** All-Stars rode their tour bus to a dude ranch in Glens Falls, New York, to shoot a video, **Big Daddy Kane** did some shooting of his own, accidentally putting a bullet in the arm of one of the extras while waving a gun at members of another rap crew. • **Kim Gordon** of **Sonic Youth** has formed a band with **Lydia Lunch** for a European tour and an album. They're called **Harry Crews**, after the Miami pulp writer, a favorite they share with **Madonna** and **Sean**. • **Jean-Paul Gaultier** has made a dance record. Called "How To Do That," it'll be remixed and recorded by different people for a full-length LP. So far **Art of Noise**, **Bomb The Bass** and **M/A/R/R/S** have agreed. • **Grace Jones** is set to release an album in June. • **The Bible** are working with country star **Darden Smith** on their next LP, which should be out in summer. • Ticket outlets in Abilene, Texas refused to sell **Metallica** tickets because they believed the group to be "sons of Satan," so the band planned to give a free concert. Ticket offices quickly changed their minds and sold six at 15 bucks a pop—Satan be damned. • In June **Love & Rockets** will begin a North American tour in conjunction with their imaginatively titled new LP *Love & Rockets*. • Coming this fall, a full-length animated "Jetsuna" movie. • **Erasure** is in the studio and will release a new LP in the fall. • June 8, **Guns N' Roses** will perform at a Radio City Music Hall AIDS benefit for **Gay Men's Health Crisis**. If the concert is televised (the deal's in negotiation), proceeds will go to AIDS care programs around the country. • **Peter Murphy** will have a new album out in summer. • SST Records recalled **Dad & Mom's** *Marshalltown Conspiracy EP* after their cover of "Magical Mystery Tour," entitled "Song For Michael Jackson To Sell," angered SBK music, which administers the **Beatles** catalogue for **Michael Jackson**. The song, named for the **Minutemen**'s "Political Song For Michael Jackson To Sing," featured samples from the **Beatles**'s "Baby's In Black" and "Mr. Moonlight" and did not credit **Lennon** and **McCartney**. • Ex-**Husker Du** frontman **Bob Mould** releases his first solo album, *Workbook*, this month. • Early in 1990, **Touchstone Pictures** will release "Diek Tracy," starring **Madonna**, **Warren Beatty** and **Mandy Patinkin**. • **Peter Frampton** will release an album this summer. • **Pete Townshend** releases an LP, *The Iron Man*, which is an adaptation of a children's book, late this month.



Dear Elvis

A Monthly Column

Since the start of the column, Elvis has been besieged with letters. He can't possibly answer them all so we select some, gather 'round the Outfit board, relay the letters and wait, just as long as it takes, for The King's response. If you have a letter for Elvis—and who doesn't?—send it along to SPIN, 6 West 18 Street, New York, NY 10011. Please keep letters short; Elvis is still a busy man.

Dear Elvis,

First, Albert Goldman wrote a book about **Lenny Bruce**. Then he wrote a book about you. Now he has a book about **John Lennon**. When you guys meet up with Albert are you going to bail his balls?

David A. Goldberg
Charlotte, NC

Dear David:

I would be lying if I said that I haven't thought about stringing him up like a smoked ham and making mint jelly out of his fat New York fingers. But the truth is that Mr. Goldman is already suffering a fate worse than death. He is condemned to live without redemption, for he who hath no spirit shall forever suffer the wrath of God.

Two thousand years ago, our Lord was sold out for a few pieces of gold. But even as he suffered on the cross, he forgave those who had condemned him to die. If the Lord could forgive such evil in the hearts of men, he can forgive Mr. Goldman for what he said about me, **Gila**, **Lisa Marie** and my mother **Glady**. It is not easy. It is mighty hard.

By the way, speaking of **Lenny Bruce**, did you know that he has become a student of the Bible? We have had many wonderful talks over the past years. He stopped telling jokes, but the other day, he did tell me a cute story:

Two young boys want to try cursing in front of their mother. And one of the boys says, "I'll say goddamn," and the other boy says, "I'll say hell." So they go downstairs and their mother says, "What would you like for breakfast?" The first boy says, "I'll have some goddamn cornflakes."

And the mother is furious. She screams at the boy and sends him to his room for the whole day. Then she asks the second boy what he wants for breakfast. "Well," he says, "I'm sure as hell not going to ask for cornflakes." I think that's a cute story.

Best wishes,
Elvis



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Hasta La Vista, Baby

Karyn White may not be your superwoman.

But sometimes she acts like she is. Bold and unliberated, the quiet storm comes down hard on Melrose Avenue.

Article by Leonard Pitts, Jr.

Beauty is not always pretty. Case in point: the Karyn White vigil, hour two. In a photographer's studio down in the trend-free end of LA's flashy Melrose Avenue, there are a lot of bodies waiting around this fine afternoon, doing absolutely nothing.

That's because all of the really important stuff is happening in the back: curling irons and eyebrow pencils sing, as a makeup man and a hairstylist ply their trades with painstaking care. While the rest of the studio stands idle, Karyn White is being made beautiful for the camera. Check that—more beautiful. Because even with a rainbow of curlers in her long black hair, she is still gorgeous almost to perfection.

She is also, it seems, more than a little demanding. Every few minutes, messengers appear from the back in search of something or other. Karyn wants this. Karyn wants that. Karyn wants to hear some music. Does anyone have any tapes in his car that Karyn might like to hear?

At 23, Karyn White, a former backup singer, has her second No. 1 black single, a sexy, sexually unliberated ballad of feminine endurance called "Superwoman." In her video, as she tells her man she needs more than occasional hugs, she serves his breakfast, hangs the sheets on the line, and aches each time he says the orange juice has gone sour. Written and produced by L.A. and BabyFace, the team responsible for Bobby Brown's "Roni" and "Don't Be Cruel," it is the flip side to Brown's sexual assertiveness. The Karyn White of "Superwoman" needs to please just as coldly as Bobby Brown needs to be pleased. In the photographer's studio, however, with "Superwoman" beginning to confer the credibility of an Anita Baker or Whitney Houston, there is none of this need to

please. After a forgettable Exposé-ish dance hit, "The Way You Love Me," she now makes demands with the vehemence of a backup singer turned interchangeable dance cutie turned potential pop superstar.

"When we go out on the road," says Warner Brothers Product Manager Carolyn Baker, pausing a second in her Karyn chores, "women go berserk over this song. They go nuts over it." She looks over her shoulder toward Karyn, sees something that concerns her, and bustles off.

The Karyn White vigil, hour three. "She always wanted to be a professional singer," a very proud Vivian White says of her daughter. "I said, 'You can do it, baby.' She was always real active. Always in everything that they would have at the school. She always wanted to participate.

"I remember when the neighborhood [in west LA] started getting bad. It started getting bad at [junior high] school. She said, 'I can't get killed at this school, because I'm gon' be a star,'" she exclaims. "She knew it! She always said that—I'm gon' be a star!" As the stylist arranges Karyn's hair and the makeup man paints her face, she acts the part of a star, attractive but coolly reserved. She's there, but not really. It's not surprising when she admits that she does not trust people easily.

"You know," she says, "you have to build trust. It's not that I go around saying, 'Get back! Everybody just wants to use me! Get away!' You have to build with me. I have to respect you and then I can trust you if I respect you.

"I want to be involved in everything," she says. "I want to see this picture before it goes out, I want to

Photography by Chris Cuffaro





She says she needs more than occasional hugs. Any takers?

know why am I not doing this. I don't just let them say, 'Okay, Karyn, this is what you're doing.' I like to know everything. Before, I really wanted to make everybody happy. It's like, 'Okay, sing it this way.' I would sing it that way as opposed to saying, 'No, this isn't how I would sing it.' Or, 'Wear this dress.' 'No, that's not the kind of dress I want to wear.'"

White says the change came with the realization that the industry she's in feeds on self-doubt. "Being an entertainer and being in the public eye," she says, "if you don't basically have confidence in yourself, they will tear you apart."

Vivian White was divorced from Karyn's father Clarence when Karyn was four, and managed to raise five children as a working single mother. They lived in a middle-class neighborhood on the west side of LA. If it wasn't quite Beverly Hills, it wasn't quite Watts, either.

Money wasn't a problem, says Vivian. She was working, and her ex-husband still did his part. The problem, according to Vivian White, was just keeping up with her children—especially with Karyn.

"She would go out there in Hollywood," says Vivian, "pick up the books and everything. Everything that came up, she wanted to get in it. She'd come. 'Mama, I got to be here, I have to be here, I have to be here. I'm glad she was the last one,'" she laughs,

"cause she really ran my legs off."

Clarence White watched all this foolishness with distaste. "He worked hard all the time," explains Vivian. "Two jobs. That kept him away from home a lot. So all he knew was hard work, you know? He wasn't there to listen to them and see them. I could see it in them. I knew it was in her if she pursued that career. I knew she had it."

In 1984, White got what looked like her break, when a b-list black dance performer named O'Bryan invited her on tour as a backup singer. After the tour, however, she found herself again unemployed. Her father constantly admonished her to stop daydreaming and get a real job.

"It hurt me," Karyn concedes now. "But also, it challenged me. What he was saying, it is scary. You think about it: there's millions of girls that are better than me, that are more beautiful, that write songs, that play. Sometimes, you get like, 'Man, is it going to happen?' Every time I went to an audition, I'd get down to the last three girls and I never would get it. So it was really scary."

White finally caved in. Though she kept auditioning, she also took a job with the bus company. It didn't last, however: within a few months she got a job singing the lead on Jeff Lorber's "Facts of Love." The song became a dance hit, and she signed to Warner shortly after. "Facts of Love" was spirited but anonymous; in

the interim, she has learned to sell emotion.

"I've grown a lot," she says of her singing. "I'm having fun doing it. If you listen to 'Facts of Love' and then you listen to my stuff now, it's a big difference. I don't feel I'm at my potential yet. I'm still learning."

It's dark outside the Melrose Avenue studio, the wind blowing in brisk and cold off the ocean. Inside, the shoot is over, the vigil done. The photographer has packed his lenses away, the makeup man has headed off into the night. Karyn White remains, exhausted, looking a bit less formidable in jeans and a nondescript green blouse. Since "Superwoman" hit, she's been getting to bed at four, up at nine, going nonstop, all day everyday. She's due in Germany tomorrow, and she hasn't even had time to pack. But she sits patiently, her legs curled up beneath her, talking about the hit that got her here. "I think 'Superwoman' is a statement, and I think it's saying something that a lot of people—of women especially—can relate to."

"I think it's great that I sang the song," she adds, "because when I first came out, people were acknowledging me as a dance artist; and to come up with a follow-up to that, and actually be saying something. . . ." Her voice trails away. She pauses a moment to try and muster her thoughts.

"Most people," she says, "they tell me they believe my grief and they feel like, 'God, this song was made just for me.' And I think that's great. I've even gotten letters where people said that their marriage has been saved by 'Superwoman.'"

Has there been any organized feminist response to the song?

"I don't really want to get into that—what is the club called?"

The National Organization for Women?

"Yeah. I'm not really interested in trying to be a spokeswoman. Because I like to be treated like a woman. I'm not downing men. I just want them to stop and smell the roses and look at how they are treating us. I want them to realize that it takes two."

And what would she like some starry-eyed youngster to learn from her hero, Karyn White?


White falters. "I want them to feel like they can do it, too. What can I say? I opened the door? I don't know." She pauses, looks to the ceiling for the words she wants. "I gave them . . . something," she says. "I don't know, what am I trying to say?"

She sits still on the couch trying to find an answer to the question of what kind of star—what kind of role model—she wants to be. The question, your basic interview softball, seems unexpectedly important to her. "A lot of kids," she explains, "especially the black kids, they feel like it's a dream. Karyn White gave me something: that dreams do come true. That type of thing. I just want the kids to feel that you don't only have to dream, but your dreams can come true. It's like, go."

She smiles her first friendly smile of the day. "So," she asks hopefully, "not quite happy with my answer, 'Is that enough? Can you sum that up for me?'"

Actually, yes. The woman who has spent the better part of the day dressing up like some fantasy made flesh is saying in a self-consciously cornball way that this fantasy is reality, and success does happen. It just requires you to put yourself on the line sometimes, to take the occasional job you don't want, to face down self-doubt, to listen to your father constantly telling you you're out of your mind.

Hey, Dad, she's saying, look at me. Look at "Superwoman." So how you like me now?

A high-angle, wide shot of a baseball stadium at night. The stadium is packed with spectators. The field is illuminated, and a large, three-dimensional "J&B" logo is positioned on the infield grass near the pitcher's mound. The sky above the stadium is a deep, dark red, suggesting a sunset or sunrise. The text "J&B at home." is superimposed over the center of the image.

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DESPERATELY SEEKING SATAN

Born-again evangelist Bob Larson goes on the road with Slayer, looking for Lucifer in all the wrong places.

Article by Bob Larson

I do a talk show called "TALK-BACK with Bob Larson," syndicated in nearly 200 markets.

Not just any talk show. A religious talk show that presents the Christian perspective on topics ranging from sex to suicide, racism to rock'n'roll.

I'm a Christian. The born-again kind. That means I believe Jesus Christ is the Son of God, who died for our sins and rose again from the dead to give us the gift of eternal life.

They play in a heavy metal rock band.


Not just any metal band. A *black/thrash/speed* metal band with lyrics describing sex with corpses and songs offering prayers of praise to Satan.

Which presumably means they are Satanists. Why else would Slayer sing, "Warriors from the gates of hell/In Lord Satan we trust" ("Show No Mercy")?

Am I genuine about Jesus? In my teens, I was a professional rock'n'roll musician. In my early 20s, I became a Christian. Now, Christ is my Lord, and I look forward to spending eternity with Him in heaven.

Are they serious about Satan? Does Slayer look forward to partying with the Evil One in the infernal inferno? To find out, I went to West Germany, where Slayer was in the midst of its *World Sacrifice*

Photograph by Christopher Kehoe

A photograph of several tall, columnar cacti silhouetted against a bright, clear sky. The sun is visible as a large, bright circle at the top center. In the background, a blue ocean stretches to the horizon. The cacti are of varying heights and are positioned in the foreground and middle ground. The overall mood is serene and minimalist.

THE PERFECT

SURGEON GENERAL'S WARNING: Smoking Causes Lung Cancer, Heart Disease, Emphysema, And May Complicate Pregnancy.

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PARLIAMENT

Lights



RECESS

Tour. Slayer on tour in the land of Bach and Beethoven. Bob Larson close behind. The ultimate irony.

A few weeks earlier, a Pan Am plane left Frankfurt and blew up. I landed safely in Frankfurt, but the next night in a Hamburg concert hall, things exploded. Excuse the pun—all hell broke loose.

If Slayer was going to play for the devil, they picked a poor place to do it. The hall was cavernous and cold. No heat. You'd think with Lucifer around, the place would've been a little hot, but no. It was freezing. Backstage, Slayer shivered, hunkered down like four lost sheep far from home. Onstage, they became fire-breathing demons of rock'n'roll.

To chants of "Slayer, Slayer," the band came onstage, appropriately dressed in black. Guitarist Kerry King wore a leather shin guard with steel studs in the form of an upside-down cross. Guitarist Jeff Hanneman wore a T-shirt saying, "Slaytanic Wernacht" (war machine). Vocalist Tom Araya's T-shirt declared, "Sex, Murder, Art."

They had the look of studied evil. They must have practiced for hours in front of a mirror to effect their snarls of contempt for decency. Minutes earlier, they were belching beer and tossing around a small rubber football. Now, in the midst of the fog machines and the thunderous roar of 3,000 fans, they were the embodiment of evil.

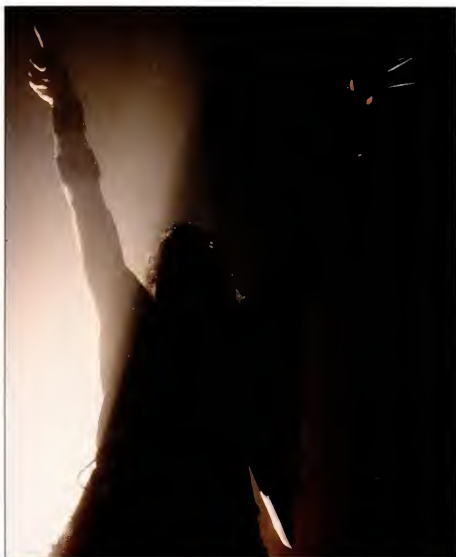
"Guten Nacht," Araya called out, attempting a little German. The fans roared with approval. He could have spoken French for all they cared. They weren't there for small talk. They wanted to hear the songs of Satan sung syllable-for-syllable, note-for-note, just like on their records. They lip-synched the words, even though the majority had no idea what they were saying. Just the obvious devilish catch phrases. They all said "****ing" on cue, but did they know they were singing about doing it to a corpse? Did it matter?

Every comment was canned. Night after night, the same song intros. Little spots of masking tape on the floor showed everyone where to stand to catch the right rigging light at the proper moment. Nothing was spontaneous. Even Araya's eyelid, which arched slightly when he said "Satan," appeared to be choreographed. Every note of every riff, every scowl, the same.

No one in the band was nervous. They had been through this a zillion times before. "Is this how Anton LaVey of the Church of Satan feels after celebrating his umpteenth black mass?" I wondered. The lighting man played his big board like a virtuoso pianist. Now the blue light goes on Araya. Next, Hanneman is stepping to the foot of the stage at the spot marked "X." Hit the red floor spot shining upward under his chin so it creates eerie shadows, as he glowers menacingly. (Remember when you did this as a kid, putting a flashlight under your chin while you told scary stories in the dark?)

The audience scowled back. Except when I took their pictures. Then, they smiled. No one heard me say cheese, but the sight of a camera caught them off guard and for a brief moment they forgot where they were. The tension in their facial muscles relaxed. After the flash went off, something clicked and their eyes narrowed again. Their lips curled in contempt of propriety, and they returned to their devilish demeanor.

Behind Slayer, the stage backdrop featured their stylized pentagram logo, centered above drummer Dave Lombardo. On either side of the Satanic symbol were two six-foot stained glass windows superimposed with a cross—upside down, naturally. The deafening roar of 120 decibels (112 is the pain thresh-



In the Church of the Poison Mind: Kerry King. He writes some sick lyrics to songs like "Necrophilia," but he'd rather be home with his dogs and snakes.

old, like standing next to a jet taking off) launched the baddest boys in rock'n'roll into "Spill the Blood" ("Spill your blood, let it run onto me/Take my hand and let go of your life. . . /You've spilt the blood/I have your soul.").

I groaned. "It isn't going to take long to find the devil around here," I thought with self-righteous smugness.

I already knew a lot about heavy metal, but actually seeing a "Satanic" band in action confounded my previously comfortable conclusions. I had thought it was an open-and-shut case. Bands like Slayer, who use occult symbols and sing of Satanic ceremonies, were the devil's doing. Like a fundamentalist Sherlock Holmes, I set forth to unmask the deceiver. But where was Lucifer?

How fitting that the madness of metal mania would strike West Germany, a country that once boasted Europe's richest cultural heritage. Before the parents of Slayer fans were born, Nazi madness unleashed an insane onslaught of evil that knew no reasonable

bounds. Demagogic rallies and sterile architecture served to promote the Aryan ideal. Mass psychology triumphed over reason. Was black metal breeding the same insensitivity to logic? Were symbols of evil (the pentagram instead of the swastika this time) once again inciting legions of the discontented to overthrow an existing order?

Fifty years ago, Germans goose-stepped in exacting regimentation, stiff-armed salutes sanctifying *der Führer*. In Hamburg, German metal maniacs strut Satanic salutes (pinkie and index finger extended) upward and slam-danced to the fastest rhythms in rock. They knew every word, even if they weren't sure of the meaning. Their favorite song was "Angel of Death," about Joseph Mengele, the butcher of Auschwitz ("Sadist surgeon of demise/Sadist of the noblest blood . . . /Monarch to the Kingdom of the Dead"). The song is a horror genre account of Mengele's machinations. The crowd reacted violently. Were they incensed that their elders allowed him license? Did they secretly long for the glory-gory days of the Third Reich? Prob-

ably neither.

The whole scene was so emotionally two-dimensional, it didn't inspire the brain to think past the surface flash.

Where was Lucifer? Satan could be in the crowd, a beer-buzzed, wasted bunch that the band referred to backstage as "German vermin." Their metal regalia was an open invitation to evil. Everywhere there were thousands of jean jackets, backs emblazoned with demonic depictions... horned goat baphomet symbols of Satan... gruesome images of devils... more upside-down crosses than a dozen of demons could concoct in a month. A strange one with sexual overtones depicted a naked woman lying on her back, legs spread apart at the junction of the inverted crucifix cross-members. Black magic pentagrams declared, "Welcome to Hell." Was Lucifer lurking there? Nah. Too obvious.

Perhaps I'd find him in the pit, that five-foot-wide section between the stage and the steel restraining bars that hold back crazed crowds. The pit is the Promised Land every true headbanger longs for. How does he cross over Jordan to get there?

It starts in the back of the crowd. A kid leaps into the air and somehow lands on top of the audience. Heads, shoulders and outstretched hands support him. Excelsior! Onward to the pit! Gradually, he makes his way forward, pushing or being pushed. He crawls on his back and stomach, surging with the intensity of Jerry Rice heading for a touchdown.

One last lunge. Head over heels, he somersaults the last few feet until he lands head-first, or hopefully feet-first, beyond the barrier—in the pit. Then, he is ungraciously escorted, to put it nicely, by security to the side of the auditorium and sent to the back of the crowd. Why do they do it? It's macho. It's fun. It's what you do at metal concerts. Does anyone ever get hurt? Sometimes, but like players in an NFL title game, headbanging pit-divers quickly get back on the field and do it again. Satan may live in the pit, but not this one.

Perhaps the devil could be coaxed during some secret ceremony of conjuration after the show on the tour bus... glorified Winnebagoes hosting a rolling revelry on wheels. I'd heard all about groupie orgies and drug-drenched bacchanalia. Slayer's bus was a bland bus, although a luxurious one. Two TVs. Two VCRs. A supply of videos, mostly horror flicks. A john (number one only, please). A microwave to cook the after-concert catered meals. A center lounge (where a lot of drinking and beer-belching goes on). And in the back, bunks. Six of them. Claustrophobics like me, beware! Satan wouldn't want my top cubicle.

Where were all the porn videos? After all, this was a Satanic rock'n'roll tour. The worst corruption I could find was one slightly used Playboy magazine they looked at again and again. It stayed on the couch in the center of the bus. Every time a band member sat down, he picked it up, thumbled through it, and laid it back down. The same breasts, the same public hair, the same silly poses. Either she was dynamite or these guys were really bored.

Probably the latter.

"I thought I'd freeze my butt off before we went onstage."

"My drum solo just didn't make it tonight. Something wasn't right."

"How many hours until we get to the hotel?"

"So, Paul, what was the gate tonight?"

"Hey, Jeff, you're into war stuff. I saw this store with some really nice German winter military jackets."

"Ice, where's the ice? They're supposed to bring it on board the bus every night after the show. You just can't get ice in Europe."

Idle conversation. Kerry kept counting the days. "Just 19 days left," he said to me. "When I saw Paul, our tour manager, as I got off the plane in Frankfurt to start the tour, I said, 'Paul, 30 days left... 30 days left until it's over, and I can go home.'"

None of them wanted to be here. It was a job, nothing more. No colored condoms backstage in the rider for these guys' contract. They weren't interested in groupies, although there aren't that many girls at a black metal concert. The ones that do attend look slightly used and very diseased.

No one seemed to mind my presence. I was part of their job, too. So what if I was looking over their shoulder? They were getting a feature story, and that's all they cared about. Backstage before the concerts, we talked about God. That's when they seemed the most conversational. But after the show, on the bus, they wanted to be left alone.

I felt they weren't doing anything different because I was there. They didn't have to snicker behind my back to tell dirty jokes because nobody laughed much. This wasn't sex, drugs and rock'n'roll. This was boredom and business.

"I want to watch 'Gremlins' tonight."

"Ah, come on. You've seen that six times already."

"My voice is hoarse. I didn't towel down fast enough when I got offstage."

"Probably that smelly T-shirt you've been wearing for the last five nights onstage. Why don't you change it?"

"Hey, driver, can we stop at the next gas station? I need some postcards to send my girl back home."

The only time Slayer spends on the bus is from midnight to 6 a.m., en route to the next city. No room and no opportunity to sacrifice young virgins on bloody altars or hold seances to conjure the living dead. With nine people aboard, it's too crowded. Besides, the autobahns are too bumpy. If Slayer truly worshipped the devil, it seems Lucifer could at least provide a Learjet to conjure demons eight miles high.

I did get one brief glimpse of the cloven-hooved Deceiver on the bus. Every night during the long drive, the VCR ran constantly—Bruce Lee, Clint Eastwood, Chuck Norris and assorted horror videocassettes. (If you're looking for film classics, try HBO on the Slayer bus.) Satan reared his horned head halfway between Donauessingen and Fiehrth. The boys were yucking it up at "Return of the Living Dead" when a nubile actress stripped in a graveyard and lay naked on a tombstone, inviting all kinds of atrocious overtures. But like the occult overtones of a Slayer concert, it was only make-believe.

Was Lucifer living in the lives of the boys of the band? I wasted no time getting to the big "S" question. "Are the members of Slayer Satanist?"

The four answers I got (in order) from guitarist Kerry King, fellow axeman Jeff Hanneman, drummer Dave Lombardo and bassist/lead vocalist Tom Araya were:

"No."

"What's a Satanist anyway?"

"That stuff scares me."

"I won't say."

I had expected a hostile reception from America's symbols of metal Satanism. In fact, they didn't know that much about why I was there. They had been given a direction to cooperate with me and that was that. Even black metal bands have to take orders from a higher authority: if not the devil, then their manager and their record company.

THE DEVIL AND MR. LARSON

Slayer's reactions to Bob Larson

Tom Araya: He asked me to define evil; I told him that evil to me was someone like Jim Bakker taking someone's faith and throwing it away. He didn't have a response to that one. But overall, I think he was able to see that we're just four people doing what we believe and enjoy as well as giving others something they enjoy listening to. He definitely developed respect for the way we live on the road. There's a tendency to assume that touring is all sex and drugs, but he saw it as it really was: sleeping during the day, gigging, travelling all the time for six months. You have to be serious to carry out that schedule.

Kerry King: I didn't know much about him before he came, but he seemed pretty knowledgeable about the music scene in general. I liked the fact that in his interview he wouldn't pin us but he'd get us to try and pin ourselves. He'd try to use your answers against you, but it wouldn't work. Overall he seemed a pretty easy going guy, but he had a problem with that bus ride. Boy, he didn't like that bus ride.

Dave Lombardo: He was real curious, didn't seem to know what the music was about. He'd just make his ideas up. After the third or fourth day it was really starting to piss me off. He said, "What is this 'head-banging'?" He tried to match things up to Satanic cults or something—he would just take it all to the extreme. Like the T-shirts and hawk patches, he'd try and tie them into some worship thing. It really made me mad, because when you get to the bare thing it's just kids having a good time.

Jeff Hanneman: I have a little bit of respect for him wanting to see the other side instead of just criticizing it. I got on with him—wouldn't be my best friend or anything, but didn't want to kill him. I told him that I wasn't really into religion—I believe there's good and evil in all men and that in some the good comes out and others the evil. I don't think that changed his faith or anything, but he certainly respected us more.

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ANARCHY IN THE U.S.A.

They tried to overthrow the government with terrorist bombings and armed revolution. Now, the Ohio Seven are serving 348 collective years, with more to come.

Article by Dean Kuipers

November 4, 1984—A flat autumn drizzle soaks rural Deerfield, Ohio, as Patricia Gros Lavasseur ties back her cascading brown hair, and tries to get her husband and three girls out the door. Carmen, 8, and Simone, 6, scramble around the house, arguing about who gets to wear what. Buck, the German shepherd, barks to be let out. Two-year old Rosa toddles around the dining room hollering for attention.

Ray Lavasseur has to chase Buck back into the house while Pat loads the red-and-white Chevy window van with desserts, gifts and the girls. Ray finally jumps into the passenger seat; Pat straps the girls into the back seat and takes the wheel for the drive to the birthday party at the Laamans' house, an hour away in Cleveland. Carmen flips Michael Jackson into her boom box and cranks it up. Ray slouches his muscular wrestler's frame behind a newspaper, wishing the music were Jefferson Airplane or Motörhead instead.

His thin French-Canadian features and piercing blue eyes frown in concentration behind the paper. Ordinarily, Ray has a nervous habit of checking the road and the side mirrors every few seconds, but not today. Pat has rarely seen him so relaxed

Photograph by Christopher Kehoe

Tom Manning considers life in the "hole" at Trenton State Penitentiary. "We had a good run," says Tom, "we broke all the records. We made some mistakes that got us caught. We'll do better next time."





and vulnerable. He isn't even wearing his bulletproof vest, and he's only brought one gun—a .9mm pistol.

Ten or twelve miles down the road, a 4x4 Bronco with blacked windows suddenly roars by on the left and then cuts the Lavasseur van off, slamming to a stop on the wet pavement. Pat jams on the brake, pitching everyone forward.

"What the fuck are you doing, Pat?" Ray yells, crumpling his newspaper against the dashboard. The back of the Bronco suddenly swings open. A man jumps out and points a pump shotgun at Ray's head.

"Oh my god, Ray," cries Pat, instinctively checking the girls to see that no one slipped off the seat behind her. Ray's first reflex is to snatch the .9mm and run for it, but in the rear-view mirror he sees a fleet of squad cars skidding into the lawn behind his van. More than 50 agents with M-16s, FBI-issue Heckler & Koch MP-5 submachine guns, and shotguns swarm into position around the van. The windows darken with SWAT uniforms and gun barrels trained on the family's heads. Ray tosses the pistol out the window.

The FBI's Hostage Rescue Team (HRT) rips the passenger side door open and yanks Ray out by his shoulders. The HRT is the Bureau's elite SWAT unit, flown in from Washington earlier in the day with three armored Broncos just for this bust. The remainder of the assault team are federal special agents, police SWAT commands, state troopers and local cops. They tear his pants off, take his shoes and shove him face first onto a wet, frozen lawn, punching him and stomping him with their combat boots. Finally, an agent puts a gun in his ear and says, "That's it, Jack."

The family that owns the lawn stand on their porch in their bathrobes, watching the excitement in silence, arms crossed, hair tousled.

Agents throw Pat face down on the grass with Ray. Another wraps a bulletproof vest around the girls. He brings them over to say goodbye. "Where will you go?" says Carmeen, the eldest, tears in her eyes. She fights the urge to throw herself on her mother. Simone and Rosa stare at their feet.

"We'll probably be close by you," Pat says, looking up through the agents' legs and guns. "Give the men Grandma's name and number. You remember it, don't you? Don't let your sisters out of your sight. Stay together."

"And be brave," she adds.

Agents hustle the three girls into the back of a squad car. Carmeen rolls down her window, pushes back her brown hair and yells, "I'll be brave, Mommy!" The car pulls off.

In suburban Cleveland, the Laamans are getting ready for the party when the phone rings. The Lavasseurs are due in about an hour. Jaan Laaman, Barbara Curzi-Laaman and Richard Williams help little Ricky Laaman and the two older girls move some of the Halloween decorations around to make room for the Happy Birthday signs.

Barbara picks up the phone. "FBI," a man's voice says. "We've got the house surrounded." She stands still, gripping the phone to her ear. Her warm smile freezes, palsied, as the color drains from her dark, Italian face. In all the years they've lived together, Jaan has never seen her like this before.

"It can't be," she finally replies. "We're having a birthday party." She hangs up.

"FBI was that?" Jaan asks.

"FBI. They said to come out with our hands up."

When the phone rings again, Jaan picks it up, and stays on the line with the agent to make time to get the kids dressed. As Barbara stands panic-stricken, her

hands flapping uselessly at her sides, Richard rushes upstairs to look out the windows. An armored personnel carrier roars across the lawn to ram into the front porch. SWAT commands with sniper rifles and MP-5 submachine guns slung across their backs scale the garage. Others take up sniper positions on the neighbors' rooftops. A 75-man assault team sights in on every window and door of the house.

"Don't do anything stupid," pleads Jaan. "We've got three small children in here and they need to be dressed."

"Send them out now—as they are!"

As Barbara watches in agony from the doorway, three-year-old Ricky waddles out into the rain, forgetting to put his hands up. His sisters, rushing out, grab his hands and hold them up. Agents flick the kids, wrap them in vests and carry them to vehicles waiting down the street.

"They're going to nail me when I walk through that door," Richard tells himself. Barbara and Jaan are thinking the same thing. But no shots are fired. The three are taken to a county jail in Cleveland to await extradition to Brooklyn, New York.

Their charge: attempting to overthrow the US Government.

The phone rang in the kitchen. Barbara picked it up. "FBI," a man's voice said. "We've got the house surrounded."

These two busts brought to an end the most exhaustive American fugitive hunt since the Lindbergh baby kidnapping in 1932. Ray Lavasseur, Pat Lavasseur, Richard Williams, Jaan Laaman, Barbara Curzi-Laaman, and two other comrades captured the following spring—Thomas and Carol Manning—also made the FBI's "10 Most Wanted" list as members of the United Freedom Front, a heavily-armed, anti-imperialist street squad. Because of the original Ohio arrests, the media dubbed these radicals the Ohio Seven.

The Ohio Seven are perhaps the last of clandestine, 60s-era guerrilla armies—the end of a 20-year legacy of violent street warfare and terrorist assaults. Radical terrorism began when it was believed that "Bringing the War Home" from Vietnam—duplicating the horror our troops saw there to the streets of America—would somehow hasten our withdrawal.

The Weathermen were the first, beginning their attacks in 1967. This ruthless, almost suicidal faction of Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) saw blue-collar workers as bigots, college students as inherently middle-class and blacks as warring on their own front. They openly reviled the endless political meetings among leftists and advocated raw street action. Disaffected students, alienated workers and high school kids were recruited to take part in daylight attacks, like that on the offices of the Harvard Center for International Affairs, where Weathermen broke windows, tore out phones, pushed a professor down a flight of stairs and beat another. They also led the "Four Days

of Rage," in October '69, challenging the Chicago Police Department. The Weathermen eventually confessed themselves when a dynamite cache detonated in a Weathermen basement on 11th Street in lower Manhattan, leveling a rowhouse, killing three members and sending two more underground.

The future United Freedom Front began its career with the explosive guerrilla maneuvers of the Sam Melville-Jonathan Jackson Unit in the mid-70s, which took up where the Weathermen left off. The core of both groups emerged in Portland, Maine, around 1973, from a group of ex-cons called the Statewide Correctional Alliance for Reform, or SCAR.

The UFF debated with twin bombings in the New York City area in December 1982. Between that date and October 1984, the UFF claimed responsibility for a highly-publicized series of 10 dynamite blasts that gutted military installations and ripped defense contractors in the greater New York City area. All four of the men in the Ohio Seven were convicted of detonating briefcases packed with TNT in the plants and offices of Motorola, General Electric, Union Carbide and four Army and Navy Reserve Centers. They kept lockers full of stolen dynamite and blasting caps. The Laamans' basement had an improvised bomb-building workshop.

After each bombing, UFF messengers delivered typed communiques to local news desks, condemning US government support of apartheid in South Africa, the instigation of imperialist wars in Central America and the colonization of Puerto Rico. The Lavasseurs and the Mannings also face charges of executing an earlier series of Boston area bombings and bank robberies in the mid-70s, as part of the Sam Melville-Jonathan Jackson Unit. The group is charged with "expropriating" as much as \$897,000 from banks between 1975 and 1984. They always traveled heavily armed and were skilled in martial arts.

Raymond Luc Lavasseur was born in 1946 in Sanford, Maine, an hour southwest of Portland. It is a mill town—textile mills, lumber mills and shoe manufacturing mills—where "union" is a word that gets people fired. His French-Canadian mother is still in the mills, where she and Ray's father began work in 16. Ray had no desire to spend his life making shoes. When he was 17, he bolted for South Boston, working on the docks and drinking wine on street corners on summer nights.

Had he arrived in Boston a few months earlier, Lavasseur might have met another of the Ohio Seven, Tom Manning, who had just shipped out for a three-year tour of duty with the Navy's Seabees.

Tommy Manning spent his childhood on the streets of East Boston—an Irish Catholic in an Italian neighborhood. By the time he was 16, he wanted steady work and the military was the only place hiding. In 1964, Manning left the homeboys behind to stand around streetlights, smoking grass and trying to get laid. After shore duty in Florida and a year in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, Manning was sent to Vietnam with the Third Marine Battalion.

Before the Third Marine landed on the beach in Da Nang, the US Government said the hostilities in the region were strictly among the Vietnamese. Manning's was the first combat unit to waste ashore and establish a beachhead firebase. Tommy soon realized he had walked into a full-scale war.

The beach in Da Nang was a sticky 110 degrees, and the battalion was immediately shelled by Viet Cong. Manning remembers crawling into a hut with a



Richard Williams, left, and Ray Lavasseur chill in Hartford Federal Detention Center, February 1989.

muddy dirt floor, where American body bags were piled up awaiting airlift. The stench from the fly-covered bags was unbearable.

The Third Battalion blasted and bulldozed its way along the North-South Demarcation Zone, laying in the first DMZ firebases. Choppers full of Marines and Seabees would unload on top of strategic hills to dig bunkers, lay in artillery installations and run perimeter, always in the middle of VC territory. They'd work just long enough to make the place relatively safe for the next wave of troops, then move on to take the next hill.

Manning's unit whacked into the jungle with 1,200 men and came out with 400. Morphine was everywhere, and a lot of the men were shooting as much of it as they could handle. Every soldier was issued morphine for when he got hit, and most of it was used as currency. Tom wasn't into downs, but he'd sit up on listening post all night smoking Thai-stick and popping speed; "one paranoid motherfucker."

Ray also enlisted for duty in Vietnam in 1967, after Tom's unit was back in the States. He had also needed a job, but admitted to having felt a vague sense of patriotism, following in the soldiering footsteps of his father and grandfather. He spent a year working

construction behind the lines, with the South Vietnamese forces, and volunteered to fly in choppers as an armed guard for cash shipments around the country. Once in Vietnam, his patriotism lasted about a month.

Ray returned to the US in '68, to finish his duty at Fort Campbell, Kentucky. The first book he picked up was *The Diary of Che Guevara*, the Argentine doctor whose expertise in guerrilla warfare helped Castro's revolution succeed. Guevara was eventually killed by US-led Bolivian officers during a failed attempt to launch the South American communist revolution from Bolivia.

When Tom Manning made it back to the streets of East Boston, in August '66, he was wired. He couldn't come down off the speed and the paranoia of the jungle. There were about a dozen other vets just back from "Nam" among the 40 regulars on the corner. Full of booze, pot and cocaine, they went on a wild stomp for the rest of the hot summer.

Manning passed an occasional night in the clinic for drunkenness and disorderly conduct. It was during a night of drinking and dancing in East Boston bar when Manning's internal charge finally exploded. He bumped somebody and a scuffle ensued. Tom frac-

tured the other kid's skull and broke some vertebrae in his neck. Unfortunately, the kid was the local DAs nephew. Manning ended up serving five years for assault and robbery in Walpole State Prison, 30 miles outside of Boston.

When he was implicated in a basketball court stabbing, Manning was sent to Walpole's Disciplinary Segregation Unit, or DSU, where he would serve the remaining 14 months of his sentence. In the DSU, or the "hole," a prisoner is isolated for up to 23 hours a day. It was there that Manning's malcontented radicalism had a chance to ferment.

During the late 60s and early 70s, prison holes were full of Black Panthers, Black Muslims, members of the Nation of Islam and of radical Puerto Rican independence movements. They all passed Manning books, starting with Che Guevara's *Venceremos*—"We Will Conquer." Then followed books by Frantz Fanon, Malcolm X, George Jackson and Mao, along with Black Panther Party literature and information about the struggles for autonomy in South Africa, Puerto Rico, and of Native Americans in the United States.

In the literature of armed revolution, he believed he had found both a material explanation and physical solution for what was happening to him. Suddenly the



The archaic weapons of the modern revolution. Then-detective Lance Woodward and the arms cache he seized in Ray Lavasseur's car as it sat in front of the Old Stone Bank of East Greenwich, Rhode Island, in March 1975.

time he had served in the jungles of Vietnam felt less like absurd madness and more like exploitation. For the first time, Manning was forced to slow down and take a look at how his career of ignorance, violence and impatience had made a few people some cash and landed him in the hole.

All four of the men in the Ohio Seven were radicalized during their first lengthy prison stays.

When Lavasseur was in jail, in Montgomery County, Tennessee, he organized a hunger strike. He was labeled an agitator and moved to Nashville State Pen, where officials put him in a cell on death row, which served as a makeshift "hole." Most of the death row inmates were black, and some were revolutionaries and separatists. As others had done for Manning, they passed Lavasseur the literature of revolution. He remained in the hole until his release, in 1971, the same year Manning left Walpole.

Both Tom and Ray abandoned old lives as aimless hustlers to search for brothers and sisters in arms. Ray took a job his mother found for him making brick blocks in Augusta, Maine, where he also became a State Coordinator for Vietnam Veterans Against the War. Soon, he was active in prison reform and created the Committee to Secure Justice for Prisoners. Tom bounced around a loose network of communes that had popped up like mushrooms from the displaced countercultures of the East Coast cities, getting high, building barns and looking for the rest of his army.

Tom met Carol Ann Saucier in 1972, as he was passing through her home town of Kezar Falls. Tom was 26 and she was 16, but she was smart and a looker: high, Indian cheekbones and a shock of black hair, and a fine nose and chin that belie her French-Canadian roots. Carol had just quit school and was looking for a way out. Tom was it. They were married that same year and moved to Portland in 1973 for the birth of Jeremy, their first child.

Tom stepped out one day onto the narrow, twisting Portland streets to find a copy of the *SCAR'd Times*, the SCAR publication. It was a collection of original and ripped-off essays thrown together as an alternative tabloid that connected issues of community struggle to militant action. He took it back upstairs and read it from cover to cover with Carol. It was exactly what Tom had been looking for. He took the day off to find their office in the old Seamen's Chapel, where he left a donation and an address in an envelope. The next day, Tom and Carol started working for SCAR.

SCAR was formed in 1972 by Alan Caron, a 21-year-old who'd just been freed from Wyndam State Prison, and about 10 other ex-cons living in Portland. Ray, then 25, moved down to join them during the summer of '73, and almost immediately moved in with the woman who would become his wife and co-conspirator, Pat Gros.

The SCAR organizers were ex-cons, socialists, comrades, anarchists, even yuppies. There was a lot of clowning around, but its members recall the group's uncanny dedication and intensity. Among Portland's 65,000 residents and in nearby prisons, there wasn't much that SCAR didn't do. They taught martial arts to kids in the projects, set up literacy programs in county jails, and provided free books for prisoners statewide. They set up anti-war demonstrations and worked with Vietnam Veterans Against the War. SCAR served as prisoners' union representatives on the outside, coordinated transportation so that families and friends of prisoners could make the trip to rural points and set up a \$25,000 community bail fund that still exists today.

SCAR members opened their homes to receive paroled inmates and invited radicals to join their political study groups. Tom and Ray constantly pushed SCAR meetings toward the subject of armed struggle, tossing around violent proposals as a matter of course.

Most of the members bailed out when it became clear they were serious.

On October 1974, Ray Lavasseur, Pat Gros and the Mannings opened the Red Star North bookstore in a tiny space off Congress Street. The store was loosely affiliated with SCAR, offering the standard texts pushed by all lefty propaganda marts from Portland to Beijing: Marxism, Maoism, labor history, feminism, Black History, the Civil Rights movement, and pamphlets from the Black Panthers and the American Indian Movement.

Within weeks, the bookstore became a target of police harassment. Lavasseur says police, sitting in squad cars stationed in front of the store, took pictures of customers. There were phony busts—like when Ray was arrested for having an open, empty beer can. They also say they got regular death threats from callers claiming to be with the Ku Klux Klan. Others added machine-gun fire and recordings of bugles playing taps to their messages. On a few occasions, people simply barged in and trashed the store in broad daylight. On these occasions, the police were strangely absent.

Area radicals were rocked in late '74 when city council hearings exposed a "death squad" within the police department—a hit squad formed to execute local agitators. The plan was allegedly to kill potential troublemakers and bury them under the new highway.

As many as five police officers were implicated in the squad, but only one, a cop named Foster, took the fall. According to court records, Foster had compiled the list of victims and offered to buy the shotgun for the killing. He was convicted and given 11 years, but his sentence was suspended: he only spent time in psychiatric care.

Word on the street had it that both Tom and Ray were on that list, and it appeared many in Portland endorsed the police department's violent intentions. A relative of one of the group was raped and beaten by two men who slipped into the bookstore while she was working alone. The relative told Tom and Ray that the men were cops. From that point on they carried guns at all times. Ray also bought a gun for the bookstore and taught everyone who worked there how to use it.

In 1974, Manning beat up his downstairs neighbor—the culmination of a long-standing dispute. Knowing the court would throw the book at him, he decided it was time to go underground. Carol soon followed him. They had been thinking about "disappearing" for some time so that they might finally realize their dream of armed revolution. They moved out of Portland and cut all contact with family and friends, except a few comrades who saw them at pre-arranged motel room meetings. With a little adjustment, though, they were able to live fairly normal lives; they saw local doctors and sent Jeremy to public school.

In March of 1975, Ray Lavasseur was arrested with a carful of guns while casing the Old Stone Bank in East Greenwich, Rhode Island. He jumped bail and went underground. The FBI's knowledge of the activities of the two couples during this period is sketchy at best. But during the Brooklyn trial, they painted a portrait of a modern-day Bonnie and Clyde gang, with Carol, Tom, Pat and Ray as the leaders.

In late 1975, the four met with other members of the clandestine group in a Portland area Ramada Inn, where they had an all-night party. They drew the

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TDK REAL

SOME
LOVE
THE FACT
THAT OUR
NEW
SA AUDIO
CASSETTES
FEATURE
ULTRA-
FINE
SUPER
AVILYN
PARTICLES
THAT CLEARLY
REPRODUCE
THE COMPLETE
MUSIC
SPECTRUM
OF DIGITAL
SOURCES.



TDK

SUPER PRECISION ANTI-RESONANCE
CASSETTE MECHANISM

IEC II / TYPE II HIGH POSITION

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SUPER HIGH RESOLUTION / RESOLUTION TRES ELEVÉE

THE DAISY AGE

“We came from Marz to hear. We’re gonna go far, so far, we’ll be off this planet!” Did y’all hear that dammit! Thiz iz the Bönz Malone Show, time tuh slammit. And those are the words of Posdnuos, alias Plug One, talkin’ about his new wave rap crew, De La Soul. Tha weather man sayz there’z gonna be a flood, & tha water level iz now three feet high and rising.

De La Soul came out of Strong Island last spring with peace signz shaved in their heads and clothes more punk rock than hip hop, popping junk about somehün called the Daisy Age. Bringing Steely Dan, “Sesame Street,” and Kraftwerk breaks, or samples, to the streets of Brooklyn, they became the first rap riddlers. What is the Daisy Age? It stands for DA Inner Sound, y’all; it also means a woman’s private partz, but even that doesn’t begin to solve the riddle.

Stop the mumbo jumbo, call in Columbo. Put him on the case, he still couldn’t name the breaks. Last summer, De La Soul offered \$500 to anyone who could name the break on their first single, “Plug Tunin’.” My guess iz Count Basie, but I didn’t win @“%&#! yet! Neither has anybody else. Yo Columbo, you on the case, or just on the pipe?

The facts: Produced by Prince Paul of Sietsasonic, from tha soul or De La Soul’s debut album, 3 Feet High and Rising, haz invaded black radio with inspired gibberish and tales of De La Rages. “I contributed an audio image,” sayz Prince Paul. “Other rappers won’t act silly, like doing their own thing, & still come off.” Joined wit’ the madcap rappers, Posdnuos (Sounds Op spelled backwards), Trugoy the Dove (Yogurt spelled backwards), and Pace Master Mase, Paul haz drafted a definite style from tha spheres of black wax. Tha album starts off as game show, as a stuffy MC asks, “How many fibers are intertwined in a shreaded wheat biscuit?” By tha time ya figure out what tha hell iz goin’ on, you’re into tha first cut, listenin’ to muziq of Sesame Street. Buck wild.

A suburban rap crew with peace signs shaved in their heads and o beat closer to Billy Joel than James Brown, De La Soul promise to bring hip hop into the “Doisy Age.” Flower power redux? Not if you know what a doisy is. Hint: it’s the same as a jenny ond o buddy. Welcome to the De La Orgee.

Radio talk show hosted by Bönz Malone

After meetin’ wit’ tha group, I downed a beer az we chood the fat.

Probably tha most important question I gottuh ask y’all: Do ya see yorsef az heroez or hippiez?

POSDNUOS: We feel that we’re made up of so many different things. We can be serious, we can be playful. Basically, thiz hole album iz tuh get away from the normal, everybody talkin’ about tha same thing. We’re changin’ hip hop around, lettin’ it go to a whole new level.

Yo, Pee—tell ‘em tha real deal, money!

POSDNUOS: There’s a lot of people out like Marley Marl. I mean he’z real deal, but a lot of hiz groups sound tha same & you can tell that’s a Marley Marl cut. We hav our own sound, so if Paul wuz to produce this other group, it wouldn’t sound like De La, thiz iz our muzik.

And isn’t dat how it should be? Personally I’m tired of the same old stuff by the same ol’ artists. It’z fly to hear a change in tha various elements of style. Last time I talked to Prince Paul, he was cuttin’ up Beethoven on two turntables. On 3 Feet, he shakes tha breaks like Betty Crocker bakes a cake, using only tha finest ingredients: Kraftwerk’s “Trans Europe Exp.,” Hall & Oates’s “I Can’t Go For That,” Ben E. King, Prince, Funkadelic, Steely Dan’s “Peg.” Pieces

of a Dream, and dozens of other break records. Tha message from tha soul iz quite clear. On “It’s a Ghetto Thing,” it states, “Kill & feed off your own brother man/haz quickly been adopted az tha master plan.” AMEN! At last, a team to direct attention to tha important issues. Who cares about a Jaguar & a fat knot, when your momz on crack! What haz been lacking iz realizm.

PRINCE PAUL: I hate to deal with people who say, “I’ll make a record an get a million dollars & truck jewels,” etc.

From tha jimmy to tha jenny, tha meca’z in tha noka’z, rap iz a multi-million dollar business. Those worthy of respect are gettin’ paid to sing ‘bout thay private partz. Lonerz hav been known not to



Johns Hopkins

hav friendz or mates, but De La Soul say thiz iz 'duh daisy age & we need a buddy. A buddy, I shoood add, iz like a jenny or a daisy—the opposite of a jimmy—if ya get my drift. De La Soul are obsessed. They may get political, but they got dem fly females that play that fancy nancy role & be tryin' tuh frunt on tha jimmy. 'S'up wit' dat y'all?

"Set aside all illegal substance & for now get 'em high off this dialect drug!"—from "3 Is a Magic #"

I can feel a takeover in the industry, a storm approachin'. An money, ya better grab ya bone, cuz it's now 3 ft. 'n rizin'. 1987-88 wuz tha turnin' point in rap & black radio. Not only haz tha war of graffiti writers continued on the walls of fame, but a wave haz brought in a fleet of rappers from Strong Island, including Public Enemy, Rakim, EPMD, Biz Markie, JVC Force & now De La Soul.

3 Feet High is the best record released in 1989. Although Amityville haz gotten a bad rep from the movie, I hearby declare honor, instead of horror, for Amityville. Would y'all want to know what thay got planned for tha future? Yeah? Well then, let's see a show of handz. Come on, gettem up! Good, now let's find out . . . Plug One!

POSDNUOS: After this album, helping Paul with a lot of projects, I'm goin' off into some producing myself, I've been offered by some of the best, like MC Lyte.

What about tourz? Any talk yet?

POSDNUOS: Yeah, there's talk. There's a good buzz for us goin' overseas, thingz like that iz gettin' hooked up.

PACE MASTER MASE: Ya don't know until it happens.

POSDNUOS: We had a little period where there wazn't too much performin' due to completing tha album, but once it's out, dates iz gonna be set. As far as for our planz, we will be doing records with [garbled, drowned out by tha rain].

What, wha'd yoo sae?

"Tha family will be introduced & it'll be us," & (we are experiencing technical difficulty, please stand by).

Did y'all hear that! Yo, John, did that come through over where you are! "Yeah Bönz!" Ladies & gentlemen, boyz & girلز, thiz haz been a Spinter-view exclusive!

This iz Ambassador Bönz, breaking so far north I won't be back till the fourth. Until next month, when the Bönz Malone Show returnz to its regularly scheduled time, I'm outy like Curt Gowdy.

Final de la message: "The bond can't be broken for it has just begun" (John 11:25-26).



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Man out of time

In the past, Brian Eno has worked with Roxy Music, Talking Heads and U2. Now he's working with a Soviet rock band and has his own label. But Eno lives in the future.

Article by Don Watson

"It's this 1962 or 20 years on?" asked the sleeve notes of the first Roxy Music LP, the record that introduced Brian Eno to the world as a decadent androgyne in shoulder-padded leopard skin. It was, in fact—as the abundance of eyeshadow and over-defined cheekbones attested—1972.

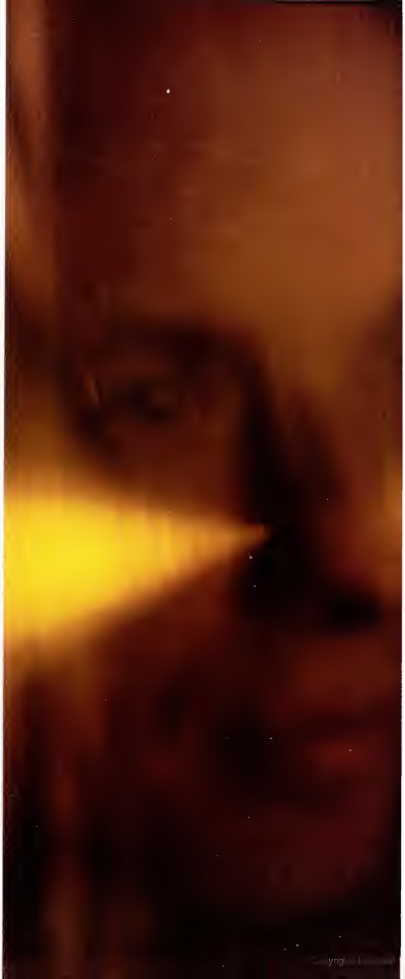
It's 17 years later, and the Eno that sits across from me is the more familiar model of the modern age, more *haute couture* than high camp, almost austere in a high-collared shirt and matching black Yamamoto jacket. Yet there's always been, still is, that sense of disorientation in Eno's work, of wondering what time it really is.

His first solo LP, *Here Come The Warm Jets*, has lasted sixteen years unscathed—the concept of a group of 21st-century schizoid men feeding an array of quaint harmonies and the Velvet Underground into an electronic mincing machine—and remains purely contemporary. The second, *Taking Tiger Mountain (By Strategy)* (1974), with its noirish sci-fi pastiches could be the soundtrack to William Gibson's cyberpunk classic *Neuromancer*, while the scratch funk and cut-ins of *My Life In The Bush of Ghosts* (the 1980 collaboration with David Byrne and Bill Laswell) sounds as if it were recorded just last week.

But it was amidst the mysterious gardens and lengthening shadows of *Another Green World*, his third solo work, that Eno struck upon the possibilities of deliberately twisting the dials on the time machine. There are lyrical switches of timescale ("I've been waiting all evening/Possibly years, I don't know"), but more importantly the music involves a series of landscapes in which change is as slow as the fading of natural light.

His recent work, whether his video installations, his taped video pieces or his "ambient" records, pursues the same ideas—music as a

Photograph by Christine Alicino





description of interior and exterior space, music independent of time. Many of the artists he's gathered together for the recently formed Opal Records have similar interests. The showcase LP, *Music For Film III*, featuring the work of Daniel Lanois and Harold Budd among others, proffers sustained atmospheres and creeping unease, far from the cut and dash of modern pop.

There is an element of time difference, too, about his latest project, producing the Russian band Zvuki Mu, whose Western debut LP was released on Opal in April. Part of Eno's fascination is that, while Zvuki Mu have absorbed much of Western pop culture, the slower channels of communication between East and West define their unique interpretation. They approach rock music the way a group of aliens might, stumbling over artifacts in a time capsule.

While producing the band, Eno spent long periods of time in Moscow, and was at liberty to muse over the difference between East and West, between Eastern and Western time.

"In a material sense," says Eno, "people there have much less control over the universe they live in than

they're talking about a whole continuum of existence which includes all the ancestors they know about and all the descendants they can imagine. In New York it's very difficult to retain an awareness of yourself located in a long period of time."

Or indeed in a dimension of history. We're accustomed to think of the past having been wiped out in Eastern bloc countries, but in the West the past is not so much re-written as obliterated, because so much is available in the present.

"Yes, I agree. Another important point is that if your 'now' becomes shorter, you become bigger in relation to it."

"People do the same with 'here,' like New Yorkers spending millions on designer-furnished lofts in Soho. Then as soon as you step out of the door, it's absolute chaos—shit on the streets, broken roads, bums everywhere. If you can localize your sense of 'here' to 'this room' you're a correspondingly bigger person in that world. We tend to locate our sense of 'here' around what we control, because we are a will-based culture, so it tends to be inside the walls of your apartment and what's in your Filofax that day. We're reluctant to ac-

always has been a depiction of a psychological space, often of psychological cataclysm. It doesn't imply peacefulness, not to me.

"On the whole *On Land* is quite a disturbed landscape: some of the undertones deliberately threaten the overtones, so you get the pastoral prettiness on top, but underneath there's a dissonance that's like an impending earthquake."

Distorted Assimilation first occurred to Brian Eno after he had introduced the Talking Heads to the music of Fela Kuti, whose polyrhythmic Afrobeat marked the Talking Heads' *Remain in Light*, which Eno produced. On his return to Africa, Eno found that Fela Kuti was in turn listening to the Talking Heads. Eno challenges cultural boundaries; one rhythm bounces backwards and forwards, altering slightly at each stage.

Inevitably he investigated this principle in the USSR.

"Over there they really have no idea what's cool and what isn't. So someone is likely to say 'My main influences are the Velvet Underground, Sun Ra and Abba.' Zvuki Mu have a lot of what I'd call Holiday Inn jazz, these bits that creep out of the music that are like scat singing or something, but it's been redigested so many times."

"What they've heard is the Light Entertainment Radio version of the London nightclub version of the American Holiday Inn version of the original that happened somewhere in Chicago in 1936. It's been through so many phases that what emerges is not an experience so much as a sign for a certain musical idea."

The attraction Eno found in Zvuki Mu was the sense of innocence, an innocence of which Western bands are no longer capable. Central to the last 10 years of Eno's work is modern culture and its role in overcoming our tendency to see things only in terms of what we have seen before.

"That's also one of the reasons I haven't made many records lately, because the thrills I get are all to do with working my way out of a situation that I don't understand. Doing the video installations, at the beginning of each show I really don't know what I'm going to do and I deliberately plunge myself into a dangerous situation."

"Once you're out of the normal organizing mode of knowing what you're doing, a certain part of your brain disengages, because it can't keep up. You can then use that part of your brain by choice, and another part takes over."

"To be under pressure is to live in the present. It's really to see what you're doing, rather than what you intended and how you failed. Innocence to me has very much to do with the abandonment of intentions in favor of dealing with what you've got. It's like watching children growing up and seeing the incredible fascination they have in things, where every object is a unique item in the world."

One of the concerns that has been voiced about the information overload of modern Western society is that it affects our capacity to dream. Ambient music slows down conscious thought to a point where imagination is freer.

"I would say that we no longer know how to use oracles," he says. "I think of dreams, based on that famous paper titled 'Dream Theory in Malaysia,' as being an oracle system. I don't think dreams are true or

"We very much locate ourselves on one plane of time. I realized this when I was in New York, where the word 'now' actually means a very short space of time—within the hour. In London when you say 'now,' it can mean a day or a week. Where I live, in the country, you mean this year."

we do here. Ambition is a pointless impulse. As a result, people's sense of the flow of time is that there is a flow of things, and that human will is not the most important power in the universe, which is what we tend to think.

"Time is less of an absolute commodity since they're so used to waiting for things. Everyone always criticizes that about their system, but the other side of the coin is how interesting it is to meet with a highly civilized people who are not dominated by our pacing of things."

A great deal of Eno's recent work has explored the pace of life, sometimes trying to slow it down to a more contemplative rate. It's tempting to see Brian Eno as someone who finds the pace of Western life too frantic and might prefer a more leisurely Eastern approach.

"In fact I'm very much a Westerner in the respect that I like to be able to predict when things will be done. In Russia the person you've arranged to meet on Thursday may not turn up till Saturday, so you can't plan ahead."

"What I find myself out of sync with here is that we very much locate ourselves on one plane of time. I realized this when I was in New York, where the word 'now' actually means a very short space of time—within the hour. In London when you say 'now,' it can mean a day or a week. Where I live, in the country, you mean this year. When the Hopi Indians say 'now,'

cept that there are parts of the world that we don't have control over and would have to be just a particle within."

Eno has been one of the few people to recognize that along with this new pattern of living comes a new approach to listening. Increasingly we might use sound as part of the creation of an environment, in the same way as light. The ethic of ambient music, an initial anathema to most "rock" critics, has had to be reappraised given the huge sales of New Age music, which is also concerned with the creation of atmosphere.

But where the manner of listening is comparable, the thinking behind Eno's work is diametrically opposed to the New Age phenomenon. Where New Age concentrates entirely on relaxing, pastoral textures, a record like *On Land* (1982), also conceived as landscape music, begs a broader definition.

"You see," Eno explains, "texture is information. Texture is only form looked at from a distance. If you look at this carpet, you perceive it as texture, but if you looked closer, you would see that it's actually a whole lot of forms. If you take birdsong—which is one of the aural textures of being in the country—the fact of it is that much of it is the sound of alarms and distress and attack."

"Landscape is a funny word for me, because it does conjure up pictures of nice little paintings with little paths going down them, but landscape really is and

Continued on page 97



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The man who would be **KING**

At 33, Elvis Costello is the most important songwriter of his generation. Through 12 years of setting smokescreens, he's done his best to hide this. He's been a punk, a joker, a riddler and a brilliant mistake. But we'll always think of him as Elvis.

By Christian Logan Wright

Elvis Costello bursts into the Park Avenue hotel suite mumbling "Hello," looking back over his shoulder to make sure his wife Cait O'Riordan is still following him. Her face hidden by a mass of dark hair, she looks only at him. He peers over the rim of this year's glasses and, taking laughably large, flat-footed steps, approaches, hand extended. "Careful," he says. "I might give you a shock."

Born August 25, 1955, the son of a jazz trumpeter, Declan Patrick MacManus grew up in working-class Liverpool, where he read the music weeklies because he couldn't afford to go to shows. In 1977, a 22-year-old malcontent with a wife, a kid, and an album's worth of songs recorded on sick days away from his computer job, he went to London and played in the street outside a CBS Records convention, hoping to get signed to a major label.

He released *My Aim Is True*, checkerboard cover framing a hostile geek calling himself Elvis Costello (he got the name late one night, drunk off his head in a

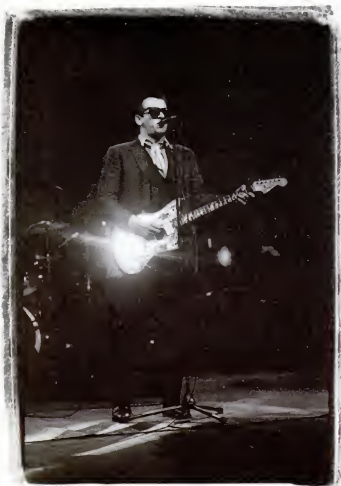
pub, from manager Jake Riviera) and spitting things like, "Why do you have to say that there's always someone who can do it better than I can." The stage was set; the script boiled with dissatisfaction, sexual insecurity, political atrocity, the rage of a passionate boy in complacent company; and the actor was well-suited.

There's a table in the corner of the hotel suite with coffee and Perrier water on it. Elvis and Cait are fooling around, whispering to each other; she pours some Perrier water on him and giggles while he says, "Oh, that's a very rock'n'roll thing to do." They moon about like they've got a secret. Elvis takes his coffee black and sits down on the end of the sofa. Cait, in an oversized black sweater covering her four-month stomach, curls up at the other end, sniggering through the pages of a paperback novel, never saying a word.

He glances over at Cait from time to time—a silver chain on his left wrist reads, "Dec Arna Cait." When he leans forward, the cuff of his shirt pinches the flesh on his forearm and his thighs strain the inner seams of

Photograph by Christopher Kehoe





"People try to psychoanalyze why I've used different names at different times. It's just a device."

his tailored black trousers. "Do you know flowers are not the colors they are?" he asks. "Do you know this? Scientists have worked out the spectrum that insects and birds see and obviously we know the one that we see and they're completely different. And like daisies are not yellow and white, they're really purple and orange."

In the 12 years between *My Aim Is True* and the new *Spike*, Costello has been separated, reconciled and divorced; has abused drugs, philandered and quite recently remarried, this time to former Pogue Cait O'Riordan. He's been covered by Linda Ronstadt, Roy Orbison, George Jones and Johnny Cash, insulted Ray Charles, put out eleven albums, turned 33, and recorded under so many names that 1987's *Out of Our Idiot*, a compilation of b-sides and alternative versions, was credited to "various artists." The various artists—the Impostor, the Emotional Toothpaste, Elvis Costello, the Coward Brothers (with T-Bone Burnett), Napoleon Dynamite—were all Declan MacManus holding the world at arm's length.

"You can change your name but you can't change your face," he wrote in a song lyric, then in 1986 decided to legally change his name back to Declan Patrick Aloysius MacManus. The "Aloysius" was his reward for enduring the life of Elvis Costello. Now he's the Beloved Entertainer, playing with society's sick fascination with the private lives of its stars.

SPIN: Are there mornings when you wake up as Elvis Costello and mornings when you wake up as Declan MacManus?

No, I never think about those things.

Never?

Except when people ask me questions about it. People try to psychoanalyze why I've used different names at different times. It's just a device. I think sometimes people whose job it is to write about music ponder too much for their own sanity on the meanings of things and transfer their own neuroses about those sort of things onto people who do things for much more basic motives.

I wasn't questioning your motivation, it's just that you've been at it for so long, the line between the real and the public might have blurred.

If an actor kind of won't drop his role they think he's crazy. Nobody thinks anything of seeing an actor one day playing an old man and the next day playing a hoodlum.

What if he plays the same role over and over again?

I think with a singer it's so common to get one idea and make a whole career out of that. If you don't do that then you're a weirdo. You do what I do, which is just follow your feelings and use different characters

from time to time to present something appropriate to the song, like I separated the song "Pills and Soap" from the rest of my material by [recording it under the name] the Impostor, which I thought was funny.

I didn't want that to be me, even though it was me. It was very basic theater, just like an actor. And then suddenly it's gotta have some dark psychological meaning.

Nobody used to do that. [raising his voice] Nobody ever questioned—nobody ever said about Louis Armstrong, "Oh, there he is, old Satchmo, what does that mean? Maybe he's got a skin like leather." People had that image of him. But nobody ever separated it. It, it, it wasn't relevant, he was just a trumpet player, he was just a brilliant trumpet player. This all came out of that 1969 era when everything turned into damn art. Before that it was just music. Nobody ever said, "Duke Ellington, who the fuck does he think he is, calling himself Duke?" Now, people think, "Oh, Prince, that means he's a control freak."

But that's his name.

But that's much less interesting than listening to one of his records. Isn't it? I think so.

But, but . . .

I don't want to read a book about Prince. I want to listen to one of his records. I want to listen to Duke Ellington, I don't want to analyze him. The only point to all of this is just to tell people where to go and get it, it's like a signpost, the rest of it's just nonsense. I really do believe that. I can't agree with that. It's just wacky.

On *Spike* you worked with a lot of people: Paul McCartney, Chrissie Hynde, Allen Toussaint. Has anyone ever turned you down on a project?

No. I haven't ever really called up people out of the blue. There's nearly always some contact. The people I was most nervous about approaching for this record were Derek Bell, the harp player from the Chieftains, 'cause I didn't know him and neither did anybody else. And Roger McGuinn [of the Byrds], who wasn't originally scheduled to be on the record, but we met him while we were recording—and T-Bone Burnett, one of Costello's producers] had met him on Dylan's Rolling Thunder tour in the 70s. I've worked with all the other people before in one way or another.

Do you find it ultimately confining or inspiring to work with other people?

Other people as opposed to just myself?

Yes.

It's quite different. I love going in the studio and putting together rough versions. I don't make home demos very often. I usually get my ideas pretty clear and I'll do any demos at all I go into a proper recording studio and start making a little record of it. I like to be able to use several instruments, and I never use a drum machine. So what you end up with is a completely chaotic version of a song, because nothing's in time. And I love these little demos, I've even put a few of them out—the ones that hold together enough. I love doing them 'cause I discover what I want to hear in the song. You experiment by getting in the music, and it's like being a child with a mudbath.

You use several of Tom Waits's musicians. Would you like to work with Waits?

I think it would be quite difficult to accommodate the two people. I really, really love his music but I



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can't really imagine how it would happen.

He's in a class of one. He creates a kind of crazy house with these funny little angles inside it, with the different players doing these things and the characters can't walk in a straight line anymore. They have to walk crooked around this stuff. It's like a little room and it encourages you into it, and then it's like a Venus flytrap—it all closes in around you. If you don't want to go in that room then there's no way you're gonna enter.

It sounds like a nice idea, working with him, yet that's a bit like making up your favorite football team. Some people might even think that's what I was doing with this record—to get these ideal people—but I honestly stand by all of the choices.

When working with other people on a song, like

"I think music was more important, more capable of effecting a change in people's attitudes, when it was less accessible. 'Cause it's just like drugs then, people want it 'cause they can't get it."

"Deep Dark Truthful Mirror," which is full of surreal, non-sequitur images, has anyone directly involved ever questioned the lyrics?

No. I showed everybody the lyrics and I explained it in simple terms. I used to just put lyrics down and say, "The hell with whether people think this is stupid, because I'm taking a chance here by saying something in a strange way." But with "Deep Dark Truthful Mirror," I demystified the lyric by explaining very, very simply, so there was absolutely no ambiguity in the meaning of it. I said, "Here's a drunk guy, he's on his way home, he won't go home, he's chasing something that isn't there. He won't admit his problem and he starts to hallucinate." It's a simple thing. Now, if I wrote that on the sleeve it would take away some of the mystery, and stop people from going, "Well what the hell does it mean, 'butterfly drinks a turtle's tears'?" You know, "Jesus wept, he felt abandoned."

You have to leave space in the room for people's imagination to run around in. I make no apology for using those images, 'cause they're very striking. I mean, what am I supposed to have? A voice that goes [whispering with hands cupped round his mouth], "And then he started to hallucinate." Wouldn't that spoil it [sn't that kind of treating people like children]? But sometimes when you've got the musicians who are concentrating on the musical interpretation of it, you have to explain it in the most simplistic terms so it's not hidden to anybody. You have to be slightly disparaging about your own lyric so the music can really do its job.

Say with the Dirty Dozen Brass Band, they don't enter until the first chorus. The guy is marching down and down this chord sequence; it's quite literal. And just at the point where he's at the most down point in each verse they enter like somebody picking him up again off the floor. They have the effect to my ears of sounding like they're picking this guy up, but only to look at his own reflection. And then in the last verse, where the hallucinations begin, they start to wind through the chords and do all these slurs; they slide between the chords. That's using the music in a visual way. I do see these things when we're arranging stuff. They've got such a—rich isn't the right word—such a

grainy sound that it makes it not easy to understand, but easy to feel what's happening. Which is probably better than understanding it completely literally, because it isn't literal. It's hallucination.

What do you think is the most a song can accomplish?
What, you mean by effecting something outside its existence?

Yes. Why write them?

I've no idea. The most? I've no idea. "The Stars and Stripes Forever" really gets people going. So does "The Red Flag," so did "Faith of Our Father" or pop records, really I don't know. Sociologists will point to certain songs and say, "This changed the world, 'Rock Around the Clock' changed the world." "I Wanna Hold Your Hand." And then other people in their own

little area will swear blind that some little folk singer that's going round now has changed the world, or Public Enemy has changed the world.

I produced "Free Nelson Mandela" by Special AKA. That achieved something because it actually increased the size of the Anti-Apartheid Movement in England. That record came out of the blue. It didn't come out of a firmament of opinion about apartheid; it was just Jerry Damarr's act of will to put the song together. He printed the address of the Anti-Apartheid Movement, and it really did cause a big influx of letters and inquiries about the matter. Now, it hasn't achieved its objective because that would appear to be to free Nelson Mandela. But it did achieve something which maybe in the long run will be a tiny little like bomblook.

The arrogance of pop music is that you can do everything in one gesture, like Live Aid or the Mandela "Freedomfest" or the Amnesty tour. What happens is the bandwagon leaves town and the problem remains. That's the sad thing. Live Aid saved some people one year for them to starve the next. I'm not saying we shouldn't do the things, 'cause they help put the information out, but we shouldn't kid ourselves.

What importance do you think music has now? Has it taken the place of other media in terms of its relevance or significance to our generation?

I think music has been more important several different times in history than it is now.

Like when?

Like when? Like in the height of the era of opera, when every little town had its own opera. That's much more of an endeavor than every little town having an indie label. It doesn't take a tremendous amount of application to put out records or even to write most of the [laughs] records that come out.

I think when rock'n'roll first started up, definitely. I think when music was a form of communication like in Greece. Or in Africa.

It's still a form of communication.

Yeah, but when it was the only form. Before people

could write stuff down. The evidence that I see is that music's kind of an accessory. Like I've got a 14-year-old son, 13 is he fourteen on his next birthday.

Music is important 'cause it goes with his skateboard. Something like Guns N' Roses is that important to him. It doesn't dominate the picture in the same way as music used to for some people. The fact that there's a lot of it doesn't mean that it's more important. It means that it's just there all the time. It's omnipresent; it's not omnipotent. I really believe that. I think music was more important, more capable of effecting a change in people's attitudes, when it was less accessible. 'Cause it's just like drugs then, people want it 'cause they can't get it.

Before 1967, you could only hear pop music about three hours a week. So it made it very exciting. Because the knowledge that there were only three hours and when those three hours were up and you hadn't heard your favorite song, that meant you had to wait another week.

And that was better?

Well, I don't want that to come back, but we're kind of spoiled now. We can have everything we want, therefore we have nothing.

You've said that Goodbye Cruel World was the worst record you ever did...

Of the best songs. I just said that because it sounded good. What about it?

Well, there are people who...

Like that record? Well, I can't after having an honest and unpleasant opinion of something, you know. There are plenty of people that don't like me. So I can't, I'm sorry, I don't feel—it if they enjoyed the record, that's fine. The fact that I don't like it should be irrelevant.

But you made it, you're responsible...

Well, as it happens, I do think there are some good songs on it. Roy Orbison did a great version of "The Comedians," which restored the song to its original sound; that was the way it was written. I cannot remember why on earth we followed that crazy arrangement that obscured that song so badly. And I have picked holes in that record and I'm sort of tired of criticizing it. I actually think it's a wonderful record and it's probably my best record, you know?

It seems to me that you've never been intentionally obscure in your writing, but you've been often misunderstood. Have you ever thought, after writing a lyric, "This will definitely be misconstrued," and gone ahead with it anyway?

No. [pauses] No, I can't of any occasion where I've really been thinking that people are going to misconstrue it. That would be kind of strange to do that. I acknowledge the limitations of songs and still take risks within those limitations, more than I did a few years ago where I just went ahead and did it anyway and just hoped for the best. Some of the songs that I think are good songs but aren't good records on *Goodbye Cruel World*, or are pretty good records on *Imperial Bedroom*, are the most experimental lyrics that I've written—like attempting to use lyrics where not everything is clear and that [clarity isn't the] intention. They're deliberately out of focus. I just did it without worrying about whether it worked or not. I suppose as you get a little bit more experience you start to be able to get like a song like "Satellite," where it's a very big story and, like a writer that writes a story

[Continued on page 93](#)



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Country.



Black to the future, a cyberpunk manifesto brought to you in Living Colour.

Article by John Leland

When Vernon Reid was a teenager in Crown Heights, Brooklyn, in the mid-70s, he painted his entire room blue. He was studying industrial design in high school, and blue was his favorite color, so he painted the whole room a dark shade of blue, and filled it with black light posters and ultraviolet lights. Wherever he looked, color seemed to be coming out of the walls, pouring into the room. A brainy youth, a bookworm, he wasn't very good at basketball, and too much of a daydreamer to fit in with his peers, despite his efforts. He spent a lot of time in his room, studying Chinese martial arts, reading Twain and Poe, weird science books, books about dinosaurs, textbooks. Uncomfortable at parties, he considered himself an oddball, and retreated into his fantasies and the oppressive dark blue walls of his room. He was also a television addict.

In the spring of 1974, Reid got a part-time job, and by summer began to make payments on a Gibson L6 guitar. The music store was in the predominantly white Kings Highway section of Brooklyn, and Reid developed a weekly after-school ritual of riding the subway out to stare at the guitar in the window. "Friends of mine pointedly told me not to hang around after dark," he later wrote in the *Village Voice*, in an article about racial violence in America. "I took them seriously because of their grave demeanor. I went out there week after week and nothing happened, so eventually I relaxed. I trained myself not to react to the mean looks from the World War II vets, their tired-looking wives, or the sneers from their Black Sabbath T-shirt-wearing offspring. Perhaps I doubted the possibility of an incident; maybe I was too entranced by my guitar-as-Excalibur fantasies to deal with the fact that these people didn't like me.

"My wake-up call came the afternoon I went to make my next-to-last payment on the Gibson."

He was just beginning to get serious about music, turning away from painting and the theater. His parents, who moved to Brooklyn from the Paddington section of London when he was a baby, were originally from Montserrat, and they played a lot of calypso music around the house. But like many of the Caribbeans who began to move to this part of Brooklyn at this time, they also immersed themselves wholeheartedly

Don Gordon

WHAT'S YOUR FAVORITE

From hair to eternity,
Living Colour (L-R):
Corey Glover,
Muzz Skillings,
William Calhoun,
Vernon Reid.



in American culture; the stacks of 7-inch singles on the spindle in their apartment included James Brown, the Beatles, the Dave Clark Five, the Supremes and the Temptations, as well as Sarah Vaughn and the calypso records. Vernon listened to a now-defunct jazz station, WRVR, where he heard a disc jockey named the Communicator play John Coltrane. This was a heady time for Reid. His father, who worked in the post office, would talk with him about Malcolm X and Martin Luther King, and he was also learning about Paul Robeson. In 1973, his sophomore year in high school, Led Zeppelin released *Houses of the Holy*. The same year, Sly Stone released *Fresh*, his last great album. Reid became obsessed with both records. He switched from the high school science program into arts and industrial design.

He'd been playing guitar since the summer before high school, when he talked his cousin into giving him a spare guitar. He'd wanted a saxophone or flute, because he preferred the smooth timbre of the sound, but was happy for what his cousin had to offer. His uncle, who played in calypso bands, gave him his first lessons, along with the barber down the block. He was the kind of barber who liked to shower his patrons with nuggets of advice while he worked, and Reid became his acolyte. Back then, Reid got his hair cut just like all of his peers, in a vain attempt to fit in. If Melvyn the barber were to see him now, with the spiky, worm-like braids sprouting up from the top of his head, he would, according to Reid, probably be appalled.

The day he made his next-to-last trip to Kings Highway, Reid "left the store later than usual, but it wouldn't be dark for a couple of hours. Two blocks away a hoarse, disembodied shout startled me, 'Hey, nigger!' Another more choked voice yelled, 'We coming around the block, nigger, don't be here when we get back!' A cold wave of adrenaline washed over me, a blend of terror and anger. I saw a car speed away, four or five teenagers laughing heartily." When a group of white teenagers caused the violent death of a black man in Howard Beach, Queens, in December of 1986, Reid remembered this incident and the rage he'd felt. "In my life," he wrote, "things have happened that have forced me to look hard at the reality of black life in America. As black people we have to stop kidding ourselves."

At age 30, Living Colour guitarist and fashion icon Vernon Reid has become an institution in New York, someone everybody knows and almost everybody likes. One black writer considers Reid part of the "Brooklyn black Mafia," a shadowy group of politically-oriented black artists and intellectuals living

RITE COLOR, BABY?

within a few miles of each other: Spike Lee, Steve Coleman, Geri Allen, Thulani and Anthony Davis, Henry Threadgill, Cassandra Wilson and others. But this is a minority opinion.

Until a year ago, Living Colour was the last of the great CBGB bands. They played on weeknights, weekends, every month or two, drawing a crowd that existed nowhere else in the city: black and white, male and female, boogie leftists who looked really good in expensive black leather. The band attracted jazz fans who had seen Living Colour play with the Art Ensemble of Chicago, or remembered Reid's days with Ronald Shannon Jackson's aggressive electric jazz ensemble, the Decoding Society. In the last days of Max's Kansas City, Reid played in Defunkt and James White and the Blacks, whose front man made a name for himself by attacking members of the audience as some sort of punk catharsis. In the early '80s, these groups were the Parliament-Funkadelic of the Lower East Side junkie-slash-punk set. Both bands nourished a couple of heroin habits with the money they made at Max's, but both also brought hard funk into the hip downtown clubs well before Talking Heads did.

SPIN: So, was James White an asshole or what?
REID: Major league asshole.

In 1987, Jeff Beck heard about Reid from Doug Wimbish, bassist on the old Sugar Hill rap records and now in Tackhead, and came down to CBGB to see Living Colour. When Mick Jagger needed a guitarist for his *Primitive Cool* album, he too came down. But mostly the shows were parties. People yelled to the band as to their friends, and no

one minded when Reid's dense, psychedelic bursts overwhelmed both the material and singer Corey Glover; Living Colour was like a garage band with an incredible guitar player. As they've grown into a national pop act, they've built a proportionally much larger white audience. But in the beginning their strongest support came from a core of socially conscious blacks, many of whom considered Living Colour's existence as a black rock band a political statement. The band, particularly Reid, encouraged this. They were a great position paper on their way to becoming a great band.

When Reid started taking Living Colour's demo tape to record companies—the first tape, before Jagger produced a couple of the songs—he said he wanted the band to fit the same niche as Hüsker Dü.

Now that MTV and the video to "Cult of Personality" have helped make *Vivid* the top album on one of the biggest labels in the world, Reid is uneasy with his success. "It's amazing to me that we got on MTV with images of Stalin," he says. "The president of the company calls me on the phone now. But we're still very much strangers in a strange land. When we brought this record to the company, we told them we thought we could get it on college radio. Now it's selling 50,000 copies a week, which is more than all five of the Decoding Society albums sold combined. It's been too much for me to absorb."

A random snapshot: The 1982 New Music America Festival, Chicago's Navy Pier. The Decoding Society is the last of a week's worth of avant-garde ensembles. Ronald Shannon Jackson, the drummer from Ornette Coleman's *Prime Time*, pushes the group

through a wall of funky electric improvisations, saturating the hall with noise and rhythm. As featured soloist, Vernon Reid stands motionless, dwarfed by the audience and the screeching, careening runs coming out of his electric banjo. He looks like he is being bombarded by his own music. In the audience, an experimental composer turns away from the spectacle. "I'd like to know," he says, irritated, "what's the difference between that and fusion?" The flautist by his side stands beaming at the stage. She doesn't even face him when she answers, flushed, "It's so powerful."

Another snapshot: Black Rock Coalition meeting, an unheated Soho art gallery, early 1986. Reid sits at the head of an impromptu conference table, wearing a brown leather gaucho hat. "Yeah," a man at the table says, "that's when the b-boys come out and stick up all the white people." Reid and some friends organized the Coalition to address the shrinking commercial aesthetic of black music. "It's a bottom line issue," he said earlier: "Who defines what black is. We started the BRC because artists shouldn't be told, 'Well, we don't think that this is black.'" The Black Rock Coalition launched itself with a manifesto and a barrage of rhetoric, but today's business, dull and protracted, is less righteous: figuring what to do about the money they'd lost at a recent fundraiser. When Reid finally adjourns the meeting, everybody watches the Bad Brains' fundraiser performance on video. On the screen, a stage diver misjudges the audience below and flops, untouched, onto the hard wood floor. Everybody groans. "And it was a brother, too," says *Village Voice* writer Greg Tate.



After the video, Reid turns to leave. "To paraphrase the Smiths," he says, "meetings is murder."

Snaphot three: Living Colour performance, Tramps, New York, early 1987. Reid's electric-green kimono clashes with the fluorescent snakes on his guitar. A jagged gold earring, like the Statue of Liberty's crown, pierces his left ear. He tells the crowd a story about a group of women who wanted to get Cabbage Patch dolls for their children. It was late in the Christmas season, and all of the stores were sold out. One of the mothers heard that a store in another part of the city had the dolls. She called to confirm, and the women raced to the store. "They got to the dolls," Reid says, rushing the story now, "and stopped dead in their tracks. The Cabbage Patch dolls were black."

The crowd laughs uneasily, and singer Corey Glover leads the band into a naive ballad about race relations. He seems nervous, or maybe just shy, and wanders tentatively off true pitch.

"There are some people who are familiar with my work with the Decoding Society or Defunk who say, 'Are you doing this music because it is your music, or are you doing it to make a standard commercial album?'" At his girlfriend's house in the St. George neighborhood of Staten Island, Vernon Reid takes a sip of apple juice. The house is at the top of a steep hill, or kill, as they were called by the first settlers of the island, and from the living room you can see the harbor lights below. His girlfriend walks through the room, her hair wrapped in a towel after her shower. Reid pauses and smiles and

says, "She's great." Then he continues: "It was very weird to me because I don't think the commercial track record for bands like ours is very good. And the commercial failures are all around."

Reid has a few days off between the brief stints of touring the band's booking agent has set up. As steady and gradual as it has been, Living Colour's success has taken everyone a little off stride, and they've all been improvising the future one small chunk at a time. They don't know whether they'll be on the road or idle in a week's time; right now, Reid is trying to arrange some dates with JREHOSE.

Even in the year of the big debut album—Tracy Chapman, Edie Brickell, Guns N' Roses, Terence Trent D'Arby—Living Colour's rise has been among the most surprising. Because in any year, a group of black ideologues playing a hard rock version of Talking Heads' "Memories Can't Wait" and then a psychedelic metal song about Stalin and Gandhi, and getting over big with it, is just weird, that's all.

"It's interesting," he says, "because we're this very local band, really plugged into those CBGB nights. In a certain sense we're really edgy for commercial music. Then again, we're not completely divorced from things that are in commercial music."

"One thing that makes me nervous is that now there's a whole thing about social consciousness. I'm frightened of people making it into a trend. I'd rather for a great song that maybe has social consciousness in it to come out and just be what it is. Like Stevie Wonder's 'Living for the City': that just came out, and I was like, 'What is this?' It wasn't only socially relevant, it was a new music statement. I'd never heard anything like it."

"I'm very worried about politics in music just com-

ing into vogue. I'd rather have a record company say, 'Well, this is what you're into, it may not be what we're into but you're the artist,' than for the labels to feel, 'Wow, we've got a new socially responsible thing, and we're gonna plug this in.' That takes all the edge out of it, and subsumes it into the corporations. One of the great monstrous things about America is how it can just absorb things, and by assimilating them negate them. Like you can hear scratching now in Burger King commercials. That's what young people listen to, so they just incorporate it and it becomes part of the disposable fabric, in a sense. When you get to the level of real artistry, it's not like that at all."

"It's just like what's going on with social responsibility. Look at the Mandela Day festival: Coca-Cola becomes one of the sponsors for this thing, and yet they're still there selling stuff inside South Africa. It's like the company is so big it can do both things with no contradiction. The left hand can do one thing and the right hand can do the other thing, and no questions are asked. In terms of making political music within a large, multinational corporation, that makes politics much easier."

"We're heading into a very interesting period, and no one's really talking about it except for the science fiction writer, William Gibson. Look at what happened with Whitney Houston covering up Mandela's picture during the Freedomfest. It's unbelievable to me. But if you stop to consider the relationship corporate America has with the power of images, then it makes total sense. What's frightening is when, sometime soon, the big companies will say, 'Oh yeah, we're going to make the posters for Mandela even bigger.' And when they're at the point where they can sell that, that's when things get weird."

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BERRY FIELDS FOREVER • THE TURTLES: HAPPY TOGETHER • SPENCER DAVIS GROUP: GIMME SOME LOVIN' • THE JEFFERSON AIRPLANE: SOWERBODDY TO LOVE • THE BYRDS: TURN TURN TURN • THE ROLLING STONES: LET'S SPEND THE NIGHT TOGETHER • BOB DYLAN: POSITIVELY 4TH STREET • VANILLA FUDGE: YOU KEEP ME HANGIN' ON • THE ROLLING STONES: YOU CAN'T ALWAYS GET WHAT YOU WANT • THE RASCALS: GROOVIN' • OTIS REDDING: DOCK OF THE BAY • THE BEATLES: SHE LOVES YOU • THE DOORS: WHEN THE MUSIC'S OVER • THE BEATLES: YESTERDAY • LED ZEPPELIN: WHOLE LOTTA LOVE • GRAND FUNK: I'M YOUR CAPTAIN • ARTHUR BROWN: FIRE • CREAM: WHITE ROOM • CREEDENCE CLEARWATER REVIVAL: BAD MOON RISING • THE DOORS: HELLO I LOVE YOU • THE WHO: PINBALL WIZARD • THE ROLLING STONES: MONKEY MAN • PROCOL HARUM: CONQUEROR • TRAFFIC: DEAR MR. FANTASY • THE BEATLES: DAY TRIPPER • THE ROLLING STONES: JUMPING JACK FLASH • BOB DYLAN: RAINY DAY WOMAN • JIMI HENDRIX: ALL ALONG THE WATCHTOWER • LED ZEPPELIN: RAMBLE ON • THE ROLLING STONES: WILD HORSES • TOMMY JAMES: CRUISING • CLOVER: THE MCCOYS: HANG ON SLOOPY • LED ZEPPELIN: HEARTBREAKER/LIVING LOVING MAID • DONOVAN: SUNSHINE SUPERMAN • CREEDENCE CLEARWATER REVIVAL: PROUD MARY • THE DOORS: BREAK ON THROUGH • SIMON & GARFUNKEL: BRIDGE OVER TROUBLED WATER • THE BYRDS: EIGHT MILE HIGH • LED ZEPPELIN: DAZED & CONFUSED • THE WHO: KIDS ARE ALRIGHT • JIMI HENDRIX: FIRE • THE BEATLES: SGT. PEPPER • CANNED HEAT: ON THE ROAD AGAIN • PAUL REVERE & THE RAIDERS: KICKS • SURFARIS: WIP OUT • THE ROLLING STONES: MOTHER'S LITTLE HELPER • DEEP PURPLE: HUSH • JIMI HENDRIX: THE WIND CRIES MARY

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(L-R): Tanya Donnelly, Kristin Hersh,
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LITTLE BIG BAND

The Throwing Muses make rock'n'roll for a world where psychology textbooks are beach reading. Quiet and loud, pretty and scary, clashing and caressing—coming of age music for the past-graduate years.

Article by Christian Logan Wright

Visibility is 0 to 2 miles at the top of the Empire State Building, but the Throwing Muses stare silently out of the windowpanes for a long time. Kristin Hersh's voice creeps up from the emptiness of the ship-gray concrete observatory, simultaneously begging and scolding. Another voice bounces off it, then collides with the banging of hands against a heating duct and the slapping of a palm against a thigh, making an unfamiliar song, appealing in its awkward struggle. You're drawn to it like you might be to a child lying bloody in the street after having been struck down. It's innocent and hideous and it's happened by accident,

the song and the dead child. As abruptly as it began, the song ends and Kristin Hersh, Tanya Donnelly, Leslie Langston and David Narciizo all smile straight smiles, laugh little laughs, and fall silent again, looking out. Visibility is 0 to 2, but the Throwing Muses can see things.

"This is the mission we have to get done," says singer/songwriter Kristin. "Life gets done behind it." Life is secondary because the vision is blinding and the mission began so early on. Kristin and guitarist Tanya have been playing together since they were 14 years old, living in Newport, Rhode Island. Not the aristocratic Newport of Henry James or the Von Bulows, but

the working class Newport of poor fishermen, broken families and inbred hostility. Kristin still lives there, has her own family now: a 2½-year-old son she had when she was 19 and the boy's father, who is not her husband. Kristin and Tanya have lived in communes, been kicked out of the Brownies for bad attitudes and embezzled cookie funds, tried to be grown-ups before their time, attempted to hold things together and watched them fall apart, been best friends, taught themselves to play guitar, started the first American rock band to be signed to the eclectic English independent 4AD, and been to college. Now they're step-sisters, they've got a boy drummer (with whom they went to high school in Newport where he was student-council president, really popular) and a groovy San Franciscan bass player who's three-quarters

spiritual and physical. When you're young and you look in the mirror, someone—something—different appears every day. And that thing may not be very pretty; you close your eyes at night and you can't separate the ghoul's face from your own. But which is scarier? You write a poem or a story or a song to work that out.

Kristin started working it out three years ago on a record of dense textures, guitar splatter, and belljar lyrics. The fragmented sound of *Throwing Muses*, a college girl's dining hall conversation set to antagonistic electric screaming, was painful, self-loathing, man-love-hating. In contrast, *Hunkapoa* has levity, happiness seeping into the darkness: "It's very scary to be stripped bare over and over again," Kristin says. "But then there's the strength of tuning that achiness

"Music is the most that I can give," says Kristin Hersh. "It's the most I can do and it's utterly separate from me."

American Indian and three years older than they are. They're 22; they're me and they're you.

Difference is now they've got a major label, a fourth LP called *Hunkapoa* which is a marked departure from the tortured abrasive spillover of previous albums, and \$180-a-night rooms overlooking Central Park at the Mayflower hotel in Manhattan. A great fuss has been made especially in the UK, where they routinely land on the cover of music magazines not only over the *Throwing Muses* but over the fact that they've been to college, that they're utterly unique, and that they're utterly pretentious. They play what's called college rock, but—except for Leslie—none of them ever finished college, and the only thing that makes them look like rockers is their outdated black leather jackets. You can walk right by them in the lobby of their hotel as if they don't even exist. "The music is bigger than we are," Kristin is fond of saying. And it's a good thing because they are quite small. Small in form and small in demeanor if not small in outlook.

Throwing Muses walk like ducklings along Central Park West, sometimes single-file. They take tiny steps and cast their eyes down. It's gray out, as gray as it once was within the confines of Kristin's mind. She's written twisted lyrics about fellatio, eating disorders, cutting yourself, the claustrophobia of tranquility, the terror of tomorrow, of thinking in a singleton's world, and for a while thought she was on her way to the loony bin. But she says, "I'm not crazy anymore."

Was she ever, really, or was it that old stream-of-consciousness attack we were reprimanded for in Fiction Workshop when we abused drugs and smoked too much? Or was it simply that unnamed period between adolescence and adulthood when you can't decide what you are, or even if you deserve to be. "I used to be real sick," she says. "My self-image was like this tiny green thing swimming around in a huge shell and the shell was what I called the body. The body's eyes were so far away from where I was that it was like looking through tunnels and whoever I saw would pass by there." Maybe it was just keen self-awareness flirting with paranoia that created disease (dis-ease) exacerbated by her study of Archetypal Psychology in college and her consequent study of self,

into something that's so celebratory and sharing that with a lot of people. On this album there's a lot of sex. Like, "Is sex ultimately empowering or embittering to women? Is it something you store up to give away, or something that will strengthen you?" And those are the questions that we're always asking."

Throwing Muses gather around a table at a cavernous eatery on Broadway where the waitresses wear roller skates. They agree they'd like to see one fall over on her way to the bar. They giggle, act goofy, maybe a bit self-conscious because they're a rock'n'roll band. Steam from a big basket of vegetables rises up, clouding Kristin's very pretty china doll face, making it glisten. She speaks softly of her 2½-year-old son's Southern Baptist grandparents who were alarmed when they visited last weekend and he toddled out of the living room saying, "I'm just going for a beer." Wonder then what the Southern Baptist grandparents think when Kristin's up onstage, deftly playing guitar, eyes rolling back, letting her voice come out like bile, crying that nobody knows her pain. Offstage, she sits up straight, wears black trousers and a turtleneck with a yellow cardigan. She carries a small purse.

Kristin's appalled by the current "women in rock" category (what, pray, were Janis, Joni, Stoussie and Ricki?) and suggests instead "brunettes in rock." Dave and Tanya wonder how Tracy Chapman can now comfortably and in good conscience ride in the back of a limousine. Distinctions can be meaningless, even destructive; when Kristin speaks of a song, she speaks of the whole song—the music and the lyric—though journalists fancy she's skipping woefully down a leaf-covered path in a little girl's big garden. "As if I just write poetry," she laughs. "Like I have this band just so I can spout my poetry. I think of a song as whatever line and whatever guitar part. That's what I live for—the instrument. But people can't equate the two things. They have to think of me carrying little bits of paper around and spouting wisdom on them. Which is not the case at all." In her purse, she has a wallet with a picture of Dylan (her kid) and Andy (her counterpart), no credit cards (they've all been ripped off), a plastic bristled hairbrush, a pale pink lipstick and a couple of barrettes. No paper and no pen.

Waiting for the elevator inside the Empire State Building, the Muses recall some of their fan mail. Dave gets a lot; the operative words are "cute," "hot" and "sweet." On the collar of his Newport Fire Department jacket he wears a Guns N' Roses pin. He kinda digs that band (though the Muses' collective favorite band is the Pixies, with whom they've shared tours and management and acclaim), but at the end of the day would have to say he doesn't like them even though they're better than those "nuclear war bands, like too much junk food." He says that the *Throwing Muses*' last LP, *House Tornado*, was supposed to be their major label debut, but Sue was confused by it, didn't know how to promote it. "Hunkapoa is much easier. I'm proud of it just as I've been proud of everything we've ever done. My drum parts used to be pretty manic, now they're much more seductive. I feel like I'm learning how to speak my language. The songs are easier to get into, they're not as alienating."

Tanya wanders off to the candy machine to get a pack of gum. The elevator comes; she's having trouble with the machine, so she gets left behind.

Throwing Muses are lying on a big bed in Kristin and Leslie's room at the Mayflower, making fun of Eddie Brickell who's whining her repetitive whine on MTV. Eddie says, "Choke me in the shallow water before I get too deep." Leslie says, "I wouldn't worry about getting too deep." Eddie says, "Choke me in the shallow..." Tanya says, "Choke her now!"

Kristin pulls a green apple out of nowhere, eats it while staring absently at the screen. Tanya's lying on the bed, rolling around. Sometimes she feels like she's 12, gets accused of flirting though she doesn't think she knows how to flirt. She's got a kind of soft breathy Marilyn voice and soft wispy Marilyn hair and a tight black top and red lipstick. She's wearing a WYF medalion on a chain round her neck that her boyfriend found on the roof of a building in Boston where she lives now. "See," she says. "It still has rood scum."

Dave has a Rick Astley impression, but he won't do it. It's not time. "It's a goal of mine," he says. "You'll see it someday."

Leslie's a little bored. She's got a fiancé in Boston and maybe she'd rather be there. She was married once before, but he was into that dis- and on- and on- thing, didn't really get that her life was playing the bass, giving a lot of balance and strength to an inexperienced young band. She's got the benefit of music theory and has played in a lot of bands. But she has fantasies about Prince, that he wanted to marry her. She once waited outside his hotel, pacing, hoping he'd come out because then her life would be set.

Kristin's gone quiet. She's trusting the music that's bigger than she is. It's a funny thing, trust, a thing you outgrow like footpajamas then spend your adulthood relearning. "Music is the most that I can give," she says. "It's the most I can do and it's utterly separate from me. Because it comes from such depths, it speaks of my humanity not my personality. It's as if I hear songs, I don't make them up. As soon as it goes down, it takes on a life of its own. I can learn from it, I learn from every time I sing it. I feel lucky that I heard it in the first place." A little comic, but she can laugh about it, she can feel sorry for people who take dependence too seriously, she can frigate on what she calls childhood, the innocence and the capacity to learn that we all have, that we don't have to lose. She can be dissatisfied with the size of her feet. "Humanity is something we all share," she says in the throes of musing.

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Newport

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Tom Araya won't say if he's a Satanist. His mother prays for him every night.

Slayer from page 31

"Sorry I disappointed you and left my white polyester suit and red tie at home," I joked. "Every Christian leader has one," I said to the drummer. "It goes with the image."

He looked at me blankly. I realized he didn't know I was kidding. "We really didn't know what to expect," he responded.

In a way, they looked forward to my companionship. Their fans aren't terribly bright, and they get sick of talking to each other. A new body on the bus is a change of pace.

Kerry King was the first to open up to me. But he didn't want to talk about God or the devil. "I've got a home back in Phoenix," he said. "Rob Halford of Judas Priest lives down the road. First place of my own I've ever had. We're not a rich band. We keep putting money back into producing the show. Me, I drive a Toyota 4X4."

Kerry, by his own admission, writes some pretty "sick" lyrics. (Case in point, "Necrophilia": "I feel the urge, the growing need to **** this sinful corpse/My task's complete the bitch's soul/Lies raped in demonic lust.") But Kerry says he'd rather spend his time at home in Phoenix with his four dogs and dozens of snakes. He breeds the slimy critters professionally. Reticulate python babies fetch \$1,000 each, he gleefully informs me. Kerry claims he's never read the Bible, though he says if he did he'd probably write some Iron Maiden-style lyrics from Revelation. He looked once at *The Satanic Bible*, but found it boring and trashed it. He seemed to know little about Christianity, but his eyes flashed indignantly at the mention of Jim and Tammy. The PTL scandal inspired the tune "Read Between the Lies" ("I, Evangelist, you claim God speaks through you/Your restless mouth full of lies

gains popularity/You care not for the old that suffer/When empty pockets cry from hunger"). Televangelism scandals aside, Kerry says horror movies are his main source of song inspiration.

Jeff seemed the most uncomfortable with the big "S" question. He ascribes to a kind of benign agnosticism. He bristled at the mere mention of any assumed involvement with the Prince of Darkness. Jeff isn't even sure what a Satanist does or believes. To him, the whole thing is ridiculous. He says all religion is "stupid." And what of his lyrics like, "Lucifer takes my dark soul/Down to the fiery pits of hell," from "Necrophilia"? Watching him onstage gives me a clue. He looks evil. His eyes flash with an aggressive, almost demonic intensity. He's the headbanger cheerleader, exhorting the crowd to ever more expressive states of frenzy. He admits that something, somewhere in his childhood, angered him. "The stage is my opportunity to release that unresolved aggression," he freely acknowledges.

Dave is the kid next door you'd want your daughter to marry if he weren't already happily hooked to Teresa, his wife of two years. (Jeff and Araya are still available. Kerry is in the process of unhitching from a brief marriage he admits was a mistake.) Drummer Dave isn't comfortable with the band's Satanic overtones. "Look," he says, "I didn't write those lyrics. And I wasn't in favor of using an upside-down cross as a stage backdrop. I just want to be the best metal drummer in the business." Ironically, he's the only one with an occult background of sorts. His Catholic, Cuban-born family dabbled in the Caribbean cult of Santería. Dave remembers his mother making offerings to obscure deities. Somehow, he retained his reverence for God, probably because of a Catholic school upbringing.

Araya is a mystery. Born in Chile, he came to the US

at five years of age. His face persistently glows with mischievous malevolence. He won't say whether he's a current or past Satanist. His eyes twinkle at the question, as though he's hiding some dark secret of the soul or cleverly milking the mystique. He's an incurable pessimist. "The world is going to end in disaster soon," he says seriously. "I feel it wherever I go."

Ironically, while Araya evokes the essence of evil onstage by singing lines like "Praise Satan," his private life has been closely touched by evangelical ideology. His girlfriend's parents are devout Christians, and both his parents are born-again, ordained, charismatic lay preachers. "My mother prays for me every night," he admits with sincerity bred of Latin familial respect.

The day before I left America to join Slayer on tour, I asked my talk show audience what they most wanted me to ask the boys in the band. For two hours, our lines rang with the same inquiry stated over and over: "Do they care if their fans become Satanists because of their influence?"

One caller, David from Ontario, Canada, was a self-professed Satanist. He sacrificed animals and burned demonic images on his arm with a propane torch. "I'm 17 now," he said, "but if the devil gives me what I want until I'm 19, then I'll murder for him. I'll kill anybody Satan wants to."

David admitted, "I got into Satanism because of Slayer. It was their lyrics that turned me on. But if they're not really Satanists, I'm going to quit listening to their music."

Did Slayer take responsibility for David's deeds? I asked them that question backstage in Nuremberg. Remember what that city is famous for? Passing the buck. Adolf Eichman's excuse—"I was only following orders."

"It's the parents' responsibility to be aware of what their child is listening to," Araya argued. Kerry added, "Every album we've put out always has a sticker about objectionable language." Lombardo lamented: "I don't care about all these things. I play drums. That's it."

Does evil exist? If so, where does it come from? Not a casual question to be asked in the land that fostered the gas ovens of Buchenwald.

According to Tom Araya, "Evil could be anything... someone that does wrong to someone who's very defenseless."

Take a neglected, impressionable 15-year-old with poor self-esteem, worshipping a rock'n'roll idol, who tells him, "Learn the sacred words of praise, Hail Satan..." ("Altar of Sacrifice")?

"We're not neglecting the child. That comes from his parents. We're giving him what he likes... music. If a child is going to be vulnerable, it's because nobody is paying attention and saying, 'We love you.'"

Araya admits he would write lyrics about anything except love. "We did a remake of 'In-A-Gadda-Da-Vida,' and I changed the words 'I love you' to 'I want you,' meant in a sexual fashion. I don't feel comfortable writing about love."

Slayer is not a band of hope. You can't dance to its music, and I don't think you'd want to live by it. They're convinced the world is headed for an apocalypse soon. "Eat, drink and be merry. That's what I'm doing," says Kerry King.

I wanted to know if altruism and sacrifice fit into

Continued on page 94

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AIDS

WORDS FROM THE FRONT

Summing it all up: What we know about AIDS, what we don't know, what we may never know, and why.

Column by Celia Farber

If you have taken interest in the subject of AIDS, chances are your head is swimming with bits of information—with statistics and theories and resounding quotes from resounding experts—yet at the end of the day you're left with nothing, you can't seem to get an answer to even the most basic questions. Fifteen months ago, we kicked off this column by asking some of those basic questions: What causes AIDS? Where did it come from? How does it spread? Can a person survive it? Which treatments work and which don't? They say you can only reach true enlightenment when you're able to say, "I don't know." Well—here it is: We don't know. Or rather, we're not certain.

Everything we've told you about AIDS in this column has been true. But that is not the same as saying that everything we've told you about AIDS in this column has been The One Truth.

Statistics and studies, although they are so plentiful we could carpet the earth with them, do not offer all the answers. They've all been conducted and assembled by somebody—be it institution, pharmaceutical company or pig farmer—and chances are they are loaded, if not with personal interest, at least with personal bias.

We've told you, for example, about the highly controversial AIDS drug AZT, which, until recently, was the only FDA-approved treatment for AIDS. (Aerosolized Pentamidine was recently approved for the treatment of Pneumocystis Carinii Pneumonia, or PCP.) It is clear that AZT is extremely toxic, but whether or not it is effective against AIDS depends entirely on whose study you choose to look at, and whose opinion you choose to sympathize with. One investigative reporter, John Lauritsen, has written several chilling articles denouncing AZT. In the June 6, 1988, issue of *The New York Native*, Lauritsen wrote: "The government trials of AZT, on which approval of the drug was based, were invalid and fraudulent. . . . There is no scientifically credible evidence that AZT has benefits of any kind. . . ." All of Lauritsen's articles seem to be meticulously researched, with sound sources and stacks of footnotes. Yet many AIDS activists and community leaders call Lauritsen a liar. Maybe they're on it themselves. Maybe not. Either way, accusations fly between zealots and detractors of AZT and again, there are truths, but no One Truth.

"We do know AZT works," writes Rob Schick in a pro-AZT article in the *PWA Coalition Newsline*. " . . . People will try to sell you on other treatments, claim-

ing the treatments help AIDS and don't have AZT's side effects. . . . Don't let them kid you." Schick's article cites studies from *JAMA* (Journal of the American Medical Association) that conclude that AZT is unquestionably effective against AIDS. Then, on the very next page of *Newsline*, another article reveals a study, published in the medical journal *Lancet*, which concludes that AZT may not stop HIV replication, is toxic to T-4 cells, and that although it may provide short-term benefits, after six months many patients experience opportunistic infections and malignancies—and die.

You don't have to be a doctor or a scientist, however, to recognize certain fundamental facts. AZT, like chemotherapy, definitely suppresses the immune system, but does not definitely stop HIV replication—and with AIDS the essential thing is to not destroy the already ailing immune system. Furthermore, several alternative, immune-boosting treatments with no toxicity have kept people alive longer than AZT has.

A year and a half ago, we asked the simple question: What causes AIDS? We probably would have been satisfied with the standard-issue answer, "HIV, the AIDS virus," if we hadn't run into Dr. Peter Duesberg, the UCLA Berkeley molecular biologist with a 25-year career in virology, who insisted HIV had nothing to do with AIDS (SPIN, January 1988). That was our second column and it led us down a long, complex and seemingly endless path of inquiry. For a while, the column was like a boxing ring, and we invited Dr. Robert Gallo, (twice, February '88 and March '89) and other prominent researchers to jump in and slug it out with Duesberg. We were convinced that if they kept going at it, we would eventually have a winner. We still don't. Duesberg's theory is very compelling, and if he was altogether wrong, it seems certain that he would have been reduced to mircromet long ago. He hasn't. First there was silence, now slowly, one by one, the first of his colleagues are saying he may be right: HIV may not be the cause of AIDS. Duesberg's scientific credentials are as strong if not stronger than those of his detractors, and as a member of the National Academy of Sciences, he insisted that his theory be published in their *Proceedings*. After eight months and demands of countless rewrites, they finally published it.

"Gallo called me up for the first time in years," Duesberg told SPIN. "He said he's being attacked

from left, right and middle—from the NIH (National Institutes of Health) and the Pasteur Institute. I'm beginning to feel sorry for him. He's not as confident as he used to be. He's concerned. Before, he always said that nobody cared about Duesberg, that everybody knew it was nonsense. Now, he doesn't say that anymore."

People in the AIDS community—groups such as ACT UP who are fighting the epidemic not just medically, but also politically—tend to get very emotional about Duesberg. They say he is "irresponsible" and "dangerous" for saying that the "AIDS virus" doesn't cause AIDS. Even some who concede he may be right still condemn him for possible repercussions from his theory, such as people having unprotected sex if they believe they no longer need worry about HIV. Duesberg is criticized for stirring up distrust in scientists, for introducing the doubt that they don't really know what's going on—or worse, that they do know, and are concealing the truth for their own purposes, their own eventual gain. Better to have a culprit—HIV—that can be stretched to explain the mystery, and ignore the gaping holes in the theory, than to have no culprit at all. The point missed is that if Duesberg is right, we will have spent a decade fighting a harmless virus while the true culprit is still on the loose. For some reason, that is not considered irresponsible.

Whether or not HIV is the true cause of AIDS is of monumental importance. It is the key to this maddening, deadly scientific riddle. That is why we so dog the research establishment about it, refusing to buy the party line, until it's been proven one way or the other. The idea that HIV is highly contagious and invariably lethal has already ruined society upside-down, causing tremendous and irreparable damage. The nation is struck with terror and paranoia. People are afraid to touch each other. Families have abandoned their children. People have committed suicide because they tested positive for HIV. HIV-positive children have been thrown out of school, or if they're lucky, isolated in glass cages in the middle of the classroom. Doctors are refusing to operate. Morticians are refusing to embalm. People have stopped giving blood. In Cuba, 171 people are already quarantined for being HIV-positive. Yet the fact remains: It has not been proven that HIV causes AIDS. It has simply been said to do so on the basis of faith, circumstantial and contradictory evidence. It is a la-



The most important, and often overlooked, fact to remember about AIDS is that although it has one name, it is actually several different diseases.

tent, inactive virus and it kills an insignificant amount of T-4 cells, the foot soldiers of immunity, and cannot be detected in up to 20 percent of all AIDS cases. It has only been isolated in test tubes, with extraordinary laboratory manipulations. And it has almost never been found, free flowing, in the blood of AIDS patients. HIV as cause of AIDS is, when you dig into it a little, not an open-and-shut case.

Another inflamed debate, often held in this column, has been the question of whether "healthy" people can get AIDS. Statistics show that an overwhelming majority of those who develop AIDS have weakened their immune systems with drugs, other toxins, poor nutrition, stress, multiple foreign semen resulting in repeated venereal diseases, and so on. This theory is known as the "multifactorial" theory (SPN, April 1988). Again, it's touchy, and facts, in many places, often get censored because of what they seem to imply.

All that should matter is whether or not these "co-

factors" determine who gets AIDS and who doesn't. That's a basic scientific question and should be a cornerstone in the pursuit of treatments. But politics gets in the way of science time and time again. AIDS provokes more hysteria and paranoia than any other social dilemma facing this country today, for understandable reasons. Not only is it a devastating and currently incurable disease, it's a moral stigma, in a way that cancer, for instance, will never be. A thousand distinct political and personal agendas obfuscate the very questions themselves, let alone the first few, minor answers we seem to be divining.

As for the treatments we've covered—AL-721, intravenous penicillin, urine therapy, typhoid vaccine and Dr. Revic's lipid treatment—we're still waiting for significant data on all of them. As soon as it's in, we'll give you a complete update. The most important, and often overlooked, fact to remember about AIDS is that although it has one name, it is actually

several different diseases. It is a condition of severe immune suppression. That is why it is unlikely that there will ever be a magic bullet "cure" for AIDS. Different treatments can be equally effective in different ways against different diseases. Ironically and tragically, society has spent almost all its efforts searching for the magic bullet to zap HIV, rather than treat the specific diseases, many of which have been treatable for decades. PCP for instance, which kills over 65 percent of all AIDS patients, is a treatable and preventable disease. As is syphilis, which seems to have a certain connection to AIDS.

Unsolved mysteries drive people mad. AIDS is an unsolved mystery if ever there was one, and once the compulsion to pick it apart has set in, it's easy to get obsessive.

We who write about AIDS push ourselves and each other to the brink of madness with our probings. We buzz around making our endless telephone calls, squirming away data, reading, arguing, fact-checking, going to meetings, panels, workshops, demonstrations, and then heading back to the typewriter—driven by new evidence—to write. And each time, for as long as it takes to peck out that article, conviction sets in. Conviction that this time, we're on to something.

A proper journalist, they say, has no beliefs, only facts. And he lays those facts down with a mechanical indifference. He is nothing more than the vessel through which the facts travel to congregate on the page. But naturally, such objectivity is impossible. All news is selection and, however objective the facts themselves may be, it is the selection and interpretation of those facts that betrays our inclinations—the impression of even well-intentioned human nature.

In a curious way, we distrust our humanity, because it represents the possibility of making a mistake, or of being swayed by emotions that spring from sources beyond our control. And so, we end up trying to emulate machinery in everything we do. The first step is to cut the natural flow of emotion (as if that were possible) that comes with every impression—with every face we see and every voice we hear—and take interest only in data. That was our original conception when we started this column. Even if it had to be at the expense of keeping the reader entertained, we wanted to churn out The Facts—The One Truth. It never occurred to us that although that Truth does exist, somewhere, we may never find it. ☐

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OPENS FRIDAY, MAY 5 AT A THEATER NEAR YOU.

Mr. Mike

Article by Lynn Geller
and Laila Nabulsi

Just who is Mr. Mike, you might ask? The answer is complex. You may have read his pieces in *National Lampoon*. Or you may have seen him on the original "Saturday Night Live" in "Mr. Mike's Least Loved Bedtime Stories," or enjoyed some of his infamous sketches, such as "Star Trek—The Final Voyage" or "Citizen Kane." Maybe you came across his country hit for Dolly Parton and subsequent Movie of the Week, "Single Bars and Single Women," or read one of his Teddy Bear poems. Perhaps you've rented Mr. Mike's "Mondo Video," a rare TV pilot too dangerous to air. Perhaps it was because of that danger that they never filmed two of his script collaborations, "The Planet of the Cheap Special Effects" (for Chevy Chase) or "War of the Insect Gods," where Bill Murray would have played "an exterminator leading the world against these giant cockroaches." By now you've either seen or heard of "Scrooged," written by Michael O'Donoghue aka "Mr. Mike" with his longtime collaborator, Mitch Glazer, and can look forward to more projects from the duo, "Arrive/Alive" and "The House Guest" (based on a novel by Thomas Burger).

We found him one evening singing in an elegant cabaret accompanied on piano by his wife, SNL music director and pianist Cheryl Hardwick, and the next day spent an afternoon in his well-appointed drawing room, sipping tea, smoking incessantly and being treated to the wit and wisdom of Michael O'Donoghue.

Childhood: I grew up mostly in a town called Sauquoit, in upstate New York, in the Mohawk Valley. I had rheumatic fever as a child and was rather fragile. The other kids—dumb farmers, as I called them—were bigger than I was and could pound the shit out of me. But I could make a remark about how their nose looked like a defective bicycle horn that would have



Now, the man who uttered the very first words of the very first episode of 'Saturday Night Live,' the man you love to hate and hate to love, but end up loving anyway. Will you please snap your fingers for Mr. Mike, Michael O'Donoghue.

—Writer/filmmaker Tom Schiller

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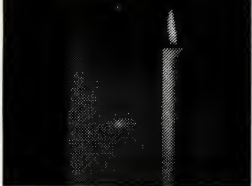
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them crying in their pillows for weeks. Humor was my defense. I spent 18 fucking years there—it was like being walked up alive. Then I got the fuck out of there, and I went to the big city where I've been happy ever since.

Mike the Beatnik: I was in college at the University of Rochester, not a very exciting place and certainly no place for me. But it was a step away from home. And then I read this copy of the *Evergreen Review* in which they had articles by Kerouac and Gary Snyder. Very cool stuff about driving across the Golden Gate Bridge as the dawn is coming up with a six-pack on the seat, a Lucky in your mouth, Coltrane on the radio, and you're with a . . . Negro—and I thought, "This is cool! I gotta be a part of this!" So I went out to San Francisco and became a beatnik in 1960.

Brentano's: When I was first in New York I worked at Brentano's book store. Older women would come in and say, "I'd like a book for my niece/daughter." And I'd say, "How old is she?" About 16 or 17. "So I'd say 'Oh, I have just the book.' It's a book about a girl her age who has all sorts of adventures and stuff and she'll just love it." And then I'd sell them Candy by Terry Southern. One woman came back livid with rage. But I know that book changed some of those girls' lives. Forever.

The Electric Circus Acid Test: In the 60s I worked as the head of entertainment for the Electric Circus, a famous 60s rock venue. I worked there for about a year until the Circus went from the sweetness and light acid period into the dark, speedjunk period. One night I was encephalizing something and I walked right through a fight where a guy was getting stabbed. And the brother of the guy who was getting stabbed was a security guard at the club and a black belt in karate. He was freaked out on something and got confused and thought I was the one who stabbed his brother, so he tried to kill me. It took five people to drive him off me, and since they couldn't hold him they said, "You better leave, Mike." I went home and I realized that probably this wasn't such a good job and maybe I should do other things to make a living.

"Saturday Night Live," Round One: I always thought the winning combination on that show was danger. Belushi, Aykroyd, Chase—even though now he's Charles Nelson Reilly—but at that time Chase was dangerous. And a lot of the writers, too, were dangerous, strange, disturbed, dark, weird people who at any given moment could snap, so there was a tension, a surface to be broken and played with and it was exciting.

I left after the first three years because I got tired of being lectured to by Lorne "The Rabbi" Michaels. I had learned enough about television to just do what I wanted to do. Like at the *Lampoon* where we just did what we did. Lorne would not relinquish control and it was tiresome. They were always fighting a war on two fronts. One was just to get the material itself and make it right and one with Lorne Michaels. I got tired of it. I also got real tired of having this "family" dealt to me, a family I did not choose. Suddenly all I hear about is this family. "Did you know that so and so did this, and so and so did that, and this one's fucking who and where and everybody has fucked everybody else." By that point, I had fucked everybody but the stage hands. I had just gone through this thing with the *National Lampoon* where all our lives got all confused and now here's another group and our lives were all confused. It was nice to get away for a while.

Mr. Mike Emergent: Mr. Mike, the character, emerged for two specific reasons. One, Anne Beatts had just left me and thrown me into a dark mood. We'd lived together for three years and we were still working together at SNL. It's always lovely when you can break up with someone and yet still work together, keeping those lines of communication open. That was one thing. The other was the fact that working under those fluorescent lights drove me crazy, so I switched to wearing dark glasses all the time. One of the first Mr. Mike aphorisms was "Love is a death camp in a costume." A very beautiful philosophy. And out of that came "Mr. Mike." Actually, I've always found that negative life conditions have produced great work conditions. The worse my life has been, the better my work has been.

Meeting Celebs: I remember, in the 70s, sitting in the restaurant One Fifth, after a "Saturday Night Live" show, talking to Dick Cavett. And this interior monologue was running through my head: God, 10 years ago in Rochester, New York, I'd be so thrilled to sit here and talk to Dick Cavett, but this guy is the most boring fucking creep I've ever met in my life—what am I doing? Get me out of here! Incidentally, didn't Ted Bundy look like Dick Cavett? Don't you feel like we just gave Dick Cavett the chair? Ted Bundy even said in an interview, "I kid you not." And the way he looks like Mr. Right and is actually Mr. Wrong—anybody might have dated him.

"Saturday Night Live," Round Two: The first time I came back it was an emergency situation. The show was about to be taken off the air and Dick Ebersol asked me to produce. It was like walking into some ad, failing corporation—no pictures on the walls and a lot of sad, angry people sitting around. I went out and got about a hundred dollars worth of spray paint to brighten things up. What's that Bill Burroughs quote—"Nothing is true; everything is permitted." I sprayed this giant quote on the walls and the brass thought I'd gone berserk. I was just trying to inject a little life into these people and I'd say to them "Write your heart, write what you feel," but they'd try to do these Mr. Mike pieces; little dark pieces about death. And really, I don't give a fuck about death. What I care about is passion, and I'd beg them to write about their passions. But they didn't have any fucking passions. They were trying to find out what my passions were.

SNL Round Two—Fear: I had gotten tired of seeing musical acts on SNL—Paul Simon and his fucking little acoustic guitar with everyone sitting in these little chairs listening. That's not what rock and roll looks like. Rock and roll is people with their T-shirts off, holding Budweisers, crowding the edge of the stage screaming, "Rock and Roll!" So when we had the punk band Fear on, I said, "Let's get these fucking people up there. Let's give the illusion." Belushi contacted some skinheads who volunteered to come up from Washington and when Fear played they started slam-dancing on the floor and stage. The technicians were middle-class, lard-ass guys who were terrified of these kids. Everyone thought there was going to be a riot. Dick Ebersol got scared, pulled the plug and took them off the air. Of course, there was no riot—they were just dancing. Hell, they didn't even get paid as extras. These were not people who were out of control. They were just a normal music group, like the Carpenters.

In fact, the only real act of violence that evening was when Ebersol ran to pull the plug on the band. He clipped assistant Jenny Agutter so hard on the ear that



an hour later she was still clutching the side of her head in pain.

SNL Round Two—Breaking the Camel's Back: I really baited them. I wrote a piece called, "The Last Ten Days of Silverman's Bunker," referring to the dismissal of Fred Silverman, chief executive at NBC. It was a 20-minute sketch that portrayed NBC as Nazi Germany, with Silverman in the role of Hitler. We had a big falling out over this and the network censored it. So, using their mailroom, I printed up copies of the sketch and sent them out to every TV reviewer in America saying I'd been raped by the phillisdine dogs. And they took umbrage to the fact that I had done this and they fired me.

SNL '85-'86—The Whistle Blower: I went back to SNL when Lorne was putting the show together that's now on the air. I was so alienated that I decided to put my imprint on only a certain number of minutes so I wouldn't be associated with the rest. I didn't actually say that, but that was my thinking. After the first few shows *The New York Times* asked me what I thought of it. I told them it was like watching old men die. Nobody told me I was supposed to lie about this fucking television show. Nowhere was that ever part of the deal, that you had to put on some corporate front and say everything was fine. So I was fired.

Comedy—The Cake Theory: Humor is not the cake. Humor is the icing on the cake. It's not the end in and of itself. Thought, communication, this is the cake. And then we put a little icing on it to get people to slice the cake and eat it. It's easy to make people laugh, but to make them laugh with purpose, to play games with them, to have some intelligent communication with

them, that is, of course, more difficult.

The Distaff Side of Humor: I myself do not fear, but actually love, women with a sense of humor. But I guess most men do fear that. "You call that a dick?" That's pretty much where the fear comes from. "No, seriously, snap on a real dick, O.K.?" That little Japanese toy is cute, you know and we can give it to the cat to play with... but I'm getting cold, so put the real dick on now." But you know, to set it in order, most men don't like men with a real sense of humor either. Frankly, people with a real sense of humor are not always highly regarded.

Relationships: I've only been attracted to two kinds of women. One is the very smart, complex, intelligent woman, preferably with a sense of humor, with whom I can have a long and very absorbed relationship. And the other kind are frothing sex weasels. The trouble with complex women is that there's always a minotaur in the labyrinth. I like my women the way I like my eggs—scrambled and loose.

"Scrooged": It's better than the book. Movies are always better than the book because they move. Books just fucking lie there.

"Saturday Night Live" Today—Why Bother?: The show has become ossified now. It's a formula. Television likes formulas because they sell ads and they never have to change anything. They'll just fly that plane right into the mud. Now they're just cranking out these shows. Lorne doesn't like confrontation and strife in his life. And the very people that make good comedy are the very people that make a hellish life around you, because they're always misanthropes and misfits

and sad fucking people. Now he's got socially acceptable people around him. The current cast is technically quite proficient but they're more like utility outfielders. There's no stars there. No one has that danger.

Look, there's no one in America who couldn't write SNL now. It's a sitting target. First, there's the cold opening, then they say "Live from New York it's Saturday Night," then they go to that sort of "The night belongs to Michelob" crawl—then the host monologue, commercial parody, then their first big piece, then a smaller piece, then the music act—I mean we all know the formula. And we could all write the formula. So it's not surprising us. It's not like what—how can they do that on television? The best definition I've come up with for comedy was astonishment. Once you see how the form works it no longer astonishes you. The magician's got to come up with a new trick. He can't keep pulling the same small rabbit out of the big hat for 15 fucking years.

It's like cards. You're dealt a hand and you keep trading cards back and forth and finally you get a pretty good hand and so you say "Hey, this is a pretty good hand, I'll play this hand for the next 50 fucking years. I'm so afraid I'll lose one of my high cards, you know, they'll take my Mercedes away, so I'll just play this hand—this is fine." They're spineless. They're not trying to push the outside of the envelope. They're just trying to cash the paycheck.

On Being a Writer: If I had my choice of occupation I would be David Hamilton, the photographer that takes pictures of underage girls. I didn't even know that was a possibility, to photograph young skank in the south of France. Check that box and fuck the writer box. That's what I'm coming back as. ☼

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Cheb Kader

RAI

It's Algerian rebel music in Paris.
It's sex music in a Moslem world. It's been
banned, and blamed for riots in the streets.
It's Rai. It's rock'n'roll.

Article by Mike Zwerin

The sound of army rifle fire mixed with exploding firecrackers in the streets of Algerian cities last October. Smoke from tear-gas and burning tires and roadblocks filled the air. Shop windows were smashed by rampaging youths—more than 20 were killed—with sticks, wine bottles and that symbol of Yankee imperialism, baseball bats. It was unexpected, unstructured, without slogans or leaders. The press called the rioters “Children of Rai.”

Like rock in the 60s and punk in the 70s, Rai music is the expression of a fed-up generation. It is a collective *bras d'honneur* (“up yours!”) from the gloom-ridden 70 percent of the Algerian population under 30 to an aging one-party directorate. Rai—which means “opinion” or “point of view”—is Arabic blues, enveloping North African traditions and textures with rock, rap, funk, salsa and reggae. But it's much more than pop music. Rai is the fire this time, a wall from the heart, a plea for life, the only truth most young Algerians believe in. It's all about their double downer, no hope at home and scraps and hatred in the promised land.

Photograph by Rito Scaglia

60s after a long and dirty war. The victors constructed a work-oriented Marxist-Muslim theocracy which is totally schizoid and just plain doesn't work. This is a patched and peeling country lit by bare light bulbs where fun is a cultural no-no and a religious sin. You wouldn't want to be an Algerian under 30 in Algeria.

Across the Mediterranean, a lot of Frenchmen express, often physically, extreme distaste for Algerian immigrant workers, who they figure killed their countrymen, and now are taking their jobs and polluting the race. One nice thing about being a Jew in Paris is that the French are too busy hating Arabs to bother with anti-Semitism. The other morning, I was drinking Calvados in my friendly neighborhood bistro feeling

A cousin to flamenco and reminiscent of Portuguese Fado, Rai began as plaintive bedouin storytelling music for weddings and village fairs around Oran, western Algeria, in the early 20th century. Like jazz in New Orleans and the tango in Buenos Aires, it took root in the bordellos, bars and dope dens of a freewheeling international port. In the 1920s, women of shady reputations began to tell ribald stories rejoicing in the pleasure of the flesh. One such singer, now a sort of kitsch hero in her 60s, is Cheikha Remitti, whose stage name is said to have come from her frequent ordering of another drink, "Remittez m'en un . . ." There is speculation as to whether she is female, male or transsexual.

of blank cassettes to stop pirating, and they hoped, to avoid Iranian-style fundamentalist subversion and squash Rai. The Chebs were simply recorded over unsold commercial cassettes, however, and the market just grew and grew. Rai was banned from Algerian TV and radio until the futility of suppression slowly gave birth to a sneaking suspicion that a tamed Rai might become a cultural export for a country with an image that could use one. David Byrne hired Rai musicians for Talking Heads' album *Naked*, recorded in Paris. And the West German Top 10 recently included a single by Cheb Kader.

Cheb Kader does not agree with the French media attempt to tie the last October's street violence to Rai: "Journalists just like to make big headlines. Rai is personal, not political, it's dance music. Rai is central to Algerian youth culture and there were a lot of kids in the streets, but you can't call it a 'cry for freedom.'"

Cheb Khalel disagrees: "Rai has changed Algeria." Despite the similarity of the names of these two Rai stars, Chebs Kader and Khalel are in fact as different as Dizzy Gillespie and Charlie Parker, as Charlie Watts and Keith Richards, as different as anybody with the same gig can be. Comparing them helps define the limits of the form.

Cheb Khalel (Khaled Hadji-Brahim), the "King of Rai," was born in Oran and lives there now, a king in his capital. He is adored, makes big money, spends it all, drives expensive cars (he has totalled several), drinks whiskey and sings all night for the fun of it and does not play the industry media game by the rules. All of which is very hip and 100-percent Rai and pure rock'n'roll too and fine with me—except when I was waiting for him on a windy corner.

At the same time, down Avenue Wagram in the Empire Theater near the Champs Elysées, an entire TV crew and cast was waiting for him, too. It was a prime-time crowd working on a hot variety show hosted by Frederick Mitterrand, nephew of Le Président de la République. You've got to respect an Algerian who shows such disrespect to the French power structure. Heavy. Bravo. Hats off. But I had no hat, the wind was getting colder and even if he did show up I was on line after Fred.

Ducking into a café for a shot of Calvados kept me busy for about an hour. Finally, this harried PR woman rushed out of the theater screaming "Asses asses!" Enough: "I don't care if this is the putain bleue (better left untranslated) is a hero or a myth or a legend in his own time. His girlfriend just told me he never left Oran. 'Don't worry,' she said, 'he'll catch the next flight.' Who does he think he is? Mick Jagger!"

That very night, however, a guitar player of my acquaintance happened to be in the Salamambo bar in the 15th arrondissement around 3 a.m. Cheb Khalel was there, fire-popping to rhythm and blues records, and then he played piano and sang the songs he was supposed to have sung on Fred's TV show. He had two lady friends with him and there were about 20 other people in the place, most of whom were not listening. My friend said: "That cat can sing his ass off."

More than any other singer or composer, Cheb Khalel was responsible for making Rai a lifestyle more than a musical style. In the early 80s he was considered too funky and generally untrustworthy to be issued a passport. He was not allowed on Algerian State television until 1985. Now he is accused of being co-opted by the State. A certain Colonel Snoussi, who runs the Riad El Feth cultural center, arranged for



A Cheb Khade concert, Paris. Like rock in the 60s and punk in the 70s, Rai is the expression of a fed-up generation.

quite at home and pleased with my Parisian image. The only other customers were two workers with vein-webbed red cheeks dressed in those blue coveralls French workers wear. They were not exactly slipping what were obviously not their first glasses of wine of the morning. They looked like they had been born at that bar—one of them had an unlit stub of a Gitane cigarette in his mouth that must have been born there with him.

A short, swarthy wall-eyed young man with kinky hair and a strong Arab accent came in and ordered tea. He was wearing three layers of torn sweaters. The barman ignored him. One of the French workers cast aspersions on the masculinity of tea-drinkers in a loud voice and no uncertain terms. The barman said he didn't carry tea. You wouldn't want to be an Algerian under 30 in France either.

Cheb means young; "dude" might do, or "kid." Cheb implies tough, like the Dead End Kids or boxers named "Kid." Most Rai stars are named Cheb—Cheb Kader, Cheb Khalel, Cheb Houari, Cheb Hani, Cheb Miami, Cheb Dean, named after James, recorded a Rai version of James Brown's "Sex Machine" in Paris. Parisian Rai concerts increasingly attract luck-the-establishment Europeans wearing chains and Mohawk haircuts—you don't have to understand Arabic to feel the blues.

Flutes and hand drums were replaced by guitars, drum kits and horns, synthesizers and rhythm boxes entered the picture in the 1980s and the lyrics became more youth-oriented. Considered by the Establishment as music made by criminals, alcoholics and sex fiends, Rai became increasingly urban and street-oriented, and popular. Like punk, it mined no words. Cheb Zahouani: "We don't drink, we get drunk/We don't sing, we scream." Cheb Abdolkh: "We made love in a rotting shack." These lyrics won't shock anyone weary on heavy metal, but making love and drinking are not, or were not, open for discussion—particularly when accompanied by electric guitars and a back beat—in a society which is both Socialist and Muslim.

The first international festival of Rai took place in a Parisian suburb in 1986. "Rai exploded like an atomic bomb in France three years ago," says Si Ahmed Soulieman, who owns a record company and retail store in Barbès, a sort of Panco-Arab Harlem, both called "Voix Du Globe." Soulieman, who is said to have had, well, let's call them financial disagreements with artists, claims to have "run Rai in Paris for the last 20 years." He estimates 50,000 Rai cassettes a year are sold legally in Paris (some of his artists estimate about five times that), plus three or four million pirate copies between Paris and Algeria.

The Algerian government banned the importation

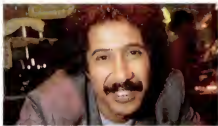
a State subsidy for Khaled's latest—and first state-of-the-art—album, *Kutché*. An Algerian journalist, who asked not to be named, told me that Khaled never did his army service and that he must owe some big shot something for that. At the same time, Khaled accuses the Algerian government of co-opting Rai: "Five years ago Rai was really raw, now it beats about the bush."

If Cheb Khaled goes out for a pack of cigarettes and doesn't come back for three weeks, which he's been known to do, he'll shrug: "It's Rai." And you can't stay angry, there's too much charm. He doesn't plan to be unreliable, he doesn't plan anything. Planning ahead is to be avoided at all costs. Do as the spirit moves you. Cypriotes can be like that, jazz musicians used to be. It's a way of life. It's Rai.

If you want to find Cheb Khaled in Oran, try asking on any street-corner and chances are somebody will say something like, "I just saw him drive that way." (I've found Alpha Blondy in Abidjan and Papa Wemba in Kinshasa in similar fashions.) He's either driving his car at 200 kilometers an hour or stopping every 10 meters to hug somebody. One reason he's so unreliable with appointments is that he might be invited to three parties along the way, and Khaled likes to party (he'll drink a fifth of whiskey one night and order orange juice the next).

Martin Meissonnier, who produced Fela Kuti and King Sunny Adé and, more than any other single person, is responsible for Paris being the capital of African music, also produced Kutché. Meissonnier loves to talk about Khaled:

"It's beautiful, this story. I'd been wanting to make an album with him for three years, but the complexity of his business affairs is mindblowing. He signed exclusive recording contracts with two promoters, one



Cheb Khaled, the King of Rai.

in Oran and one in Barbès. He records very fast, an entire cassette in a day. One take. Boom! He's had 30 or 40 cassettes on the market at one time or another. When one promoter puts out a new one, the other immediately pirates it and waves his exclusive contract.

"So there were all sorts of problems and it didn't look like we were going to be able to make *Kutché* until Colonel Snoussi called in the two promoters and pounded on the table. A week after it came out, though, one of them released a cassette with the same name and previously recorded versions of the same songs. Not only that, he used a photo I took in the studio, you know, just for a souvenir, which shows Khaled carrying tape cans and you can even see our log numbers."

Cheb Kader (Kouider Morabie) is 21, cute, hard-working, smart, keeps his appointments and is available to the press with a vengeance. Answering my questions, his eyes darted around the chic café we were in. I figured he was casing the

crowd for people he ought to meet. (Being a New Yorker, that syndrome is not unfamiliar to me.) He was trying just a bit too hard to be presentable. Purists find him somehow anti-Rai and they consider his music watered down—like pop as opposed to rock. Unlike Khaled, who tends to go with the flow, Kader arranges all his material, with no improvisation whatsoever, not even the solos. The tunes are shorter, chordal rather than modal, with rock and reggae time and the Broadway song form. His band includes two Frenchmen and one Englishman.

Born of Algerian parents in Mulhouse, France, Kader has performed in Amsterdam, London and Brussels. He appeared in the mass-audience Saturday night variety TV show "Champs Elysées." His first album will be released by Capitol in the US this year. (He has never played in Algeria.)

French disc jockeys have received nasty, sometimes threatening, telephone calls from right-wing Frenchmen when they play Rai music. Afraid of racist violence, afraid of losing listeners, rock radio has been afraid to play Rai. But the biggest French FM station, NRJ, (pronounced en-er-gey) recently sponsored a Kader concert and he feels that racism receding: "There are things I couldn't do last year I can do this year. And things I can't do now I'll be able to do next year."

Cheb Khaled, on the other hand, while not exactly your ideal role model, is an authentic *poète maudit*, a kind of doomed poet living for the moment and for his art (he has said, "Yes, Rai is art"). Music is more than a career for such a person, and money and fame are expected, not hustled. Only a born king would be secure enough to say: "I haven't the slightest idea how many recordings or concerts I've done. Rai, it's like an itch."

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THE EDGE

A lowlife guide to high culture.

Edited by Jessica Bendinger



Photo: Cerebral Inc.

Anomie in the UK

Derek Jarman's film, "The Last of England," opens with a shot of a skinhead—shirtless, ripped Levi's, boots and an anomic stare—standing atop a heap of twisted steel and chunks of concrete. He ignites a flare, proclaiming the end of grand and glorious England. A cello plays the requiem while the skinhead alternately clubs and dry-humps an abandoned Caravaggio painting of an angel.

The restless punk rises, and stomps toward an abandoned factory. A voice on the soundtrack says, "My teacher says there are more walls in England than Berlin, Johnny. What were we to do in those crumbling acres? Die of boredom? Or recreate ourselves?" The young man ties a rag tightly around his biceps, taps his forearm.

"Emerging from the chrysalis all scarlet and turquoise," the narrator continues, "as death heads from chipped plants—moths of night."

The boy taps his arm again.

"Not your clean-limbed cannon fodder for the

drudgy 9 to 5," the voice continues. "Sniffing glue instead of your masonic brandies, we felt off the cobs of misfortune. Out to lunch in 501's, nodding at the pricks in the disco. We heard prophetic voices."

The boy, not finding a vein, pulls a cigarette from behind his ear, lights it with one of the candles, takes a drag, and immediately lurches forward with a violent cough, shivering.

The narrator recites a line from Allen Ginsberg's "Howl": "I saw the best minds of my generation destroyed by madness—starving, hysterical, naked. Not with a bang, but a whimper . . ."

The boy writhes, in a fit of coughing.

With "The Last of England," Jarman, a gay, avant-garde English filmmaker who has directed videos for the Smiths and the Pet Shop Boys, has been accused of making "the longest and gloomiest rock video ever made." There's no dialogue, with the exception of an occasional narrator. Images simply come, go and return. Using three generations of home movies and ac-

tual footage his father took of a bomb raid during World War II, Jarman delivers a haunting portrait of the underside of Thatcher's England.

With a hand-held Super 8 and various color filters, Jarman films block after block of boarded-up housing projects and ravaged factories: spoils, not of war, but of consumption. The urban decay is not just England: the torn down factories of Liverpool easily evoke the slums of Pittsburgh or Cleveland, and are as much an image of the future as of the present. In this film, says Jarman, "the present dreams the past future."

There are a lot of images of suffering in "The Last Of England," but one's never quite sure what they refer to. Jarman explains, "I like to make my audiences think a bit. A work of art should always be fluid, open to different interpretation. I also think it's more effective to simply show a cold, naked, suffering human being, ankle-deep in murky water, and let the audience invent the metaphor, than to, say, shoot a man sleeping on a park bench and label him as a homeless person. Let the audience choose the issue. There are

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4/16	New Orleans	LA	Saenger Theatre
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enough to choose from.

"Economically, under Thatcher, the country is doing better than it has in 20 years," Jarman continues. "But what does that mean, really? If anything, it should mean that now we can address some of the real issues that exist, and now more than ever, we should be better equipped to do so. What's really happening is that the government agencies simply aren't doing what they should do, not even a humane, bare minimum for people who simply can't get on without help. It's as simple as that. It's just not a feeling, caring government at all. And I wasn't raised that way.

"Everyone hears the title of the film and they think I'm being rather negative. I got the title from an 18th-century painting called 'The Last Of England.' It was a picture of destitute British emigrants setting sail for Australia, some looking back to get one last glimpse of England. People think it's a negative painting, but it's not at all really. I mean, these people are at that point unhappy, yes, but they were also on the verge of a new horizon, weren't they? That's what I tried to do with the movie.

"Every generation recreates itself. I grew up on things like 'Howl,' and I guess more members of my generation recreated themselves, but there's still a lot happening. In a nation with as many young people

unemployed as mine, there's bound to be some disaffection as well as creativity.

"There's a part in the film where the narrator says: 'Where's hope? The little white lies carried her off, past the cabbage patch and killed her. She's dead? Yes. And tomorrow? Tomorrow's been canceled, due to lack of interest.' I quite meant that. Hope is indeed not dead unless we kill her with our blindness and our apathy.

"Remember, those Liverpool scenes are not cardboard movie sets. They are one aspect of our present-day reality, a reality much ignored by a considerable segment of the population. It may seem pessimistic to focus entirely on decay and misery, but it's infinitely more pessimistic to ignore it. Recognizing the problem is a necessary step in bringing the issues once again to the public's attention. I simply presented them in a way that couldn't be ignored.

"And the last scene in the film—the people in the boat—you're a passenger. Couldn't they, like the people in the painting, be on the verge of a new horizon?" *SPIN: Or the edge of a cliff.*

"Well, that's really up to them—I mean us, isn't it?"

—Michael Vazquez



Beat Press

Small press denotes literary, and in the case of this one, it's also literal. Hanuman Books is a two-man operation publishing three-by-four-inch books of portable manna from generations both Beat and Blank. Son of *Andy Warhol* by underground film star Taylor Mead and *Guiltily of Everything* by Kerouac hero Herbert Huncke are just two of the 24 titles in this eclectic collection of essays, prose, poetry and memoirs.

The unusual size of the books is convenient not only for the readers, but for Hanuman Books itself, which operates out of a studio in New York's Chelsea Hotel. Publisher Raymond Foye and artist Francesco Clemente modeled the minivolumes after palm-sized Hindu prayer books. Hanuman Books are printed in India on cotton paper made in ashrams and hand-stitched by fishermen.

"The format is meant to inspire devotion," says 32-year-old Foye. "The books are non-secular religious texts." Not your traditional religious; more than a few of the books are candid accounts of sexual encounters and drug experiments. One is called *Fuck Journal* and that's just what it is.

Hanuman Books also trip on Hinduism, prose by visual artists and post-punk sentiment. A modest 1,500 copies of each book are distributed in specialty book shops and museum gift stores throughout the country. Spring '89 titles by downtown New York art

critics Cookie Mueller and Gary Indiana are already selling out; Foye regrets not having ordered a double print run for these more popular authors, as he did for books by Willem de Kooning and Jean Genet.

"It's a beat press," says Foye, who learned his trade at the seminal City Lights Books in San Francisco. Original Beat poets John Ashbery, John Wieners, Gregory Corso and the late Bob Kaufman are all part of the Hanuman family.

"There's an irrelevance to the whole thing," says Foye. "The purpose of life is to have fun. I said that to Allen Ginsberg the other day and he said 'No, the purpose of life is to ease suffering.' But isn't it the same thing?"

—Laurie Pike

TDK PRESENTS COLLEGE RADIO TOP 40

Most played albums on college
and non-commercial radio

1. **REPLACEMENTS**, Don't Tell A Soul, Sire-Reprise, 2. **VIOLENT FEMMES**, 3. **Slash-WB**, 4. **ELVIS COSTELLO**, Spike, Warner Bros., 4. **LOU REED**, New York, Sire-WB, 5. **NEW ORDER**, Technique, Qwest-WB, 6. **THROWING MUSES**, Hunkpapa, Sire-WB, 7. **XTC**, *Oranges & Lemons*, Geffen, 8. **CICCONNE YOUTH**, *The Whitey Album*, Blast First-Enigma, 9. **FINE YOUNG CANNIBALS**, *The Raw & The Cooked*, I.R.S./MCA, 10. **WONDER STUFF**, *The Eight Legged Groove Machine*, Polydor-PG, 11. **THE FALL**, *I Am Kurlous Orang*, Beggars Banquet-RC, 12. **DEAD MILKTEEN**, *Beelzebubba*, Fever-Enigma, 13. **CHRISTMAS**, *Ultraphonics of Thee Psykick Revolution*, I.R.S., 14. **R.E.M.**, Green, Warner Bros., 15. **COWBOY JUNKIES**, *The Trinity Session*, RCA, 16. **LOVE AND ROCKETS**, *"Motorcycle"*, Beggars Banquet, 17. **WATERBOYS**, *Fisherman's Blues*, Ensign-Chrysalis, 18. **SONIC YOUTH**, *Daydream Nation*, Blast First-Enigma, 19. **BUCK PETS**, *Buck Pets*, Island, 20. **RIEVERS**, *End of The Day*, DB-Capitol, 21. **PROCLAIMERS**, *Sunshine On Leith*, Chrysalis, 22. **BRUCE COCKBURN**, *Big Circumstance*, Gold Castle, 23. **THEY MIGHT BE GIANTS**, *Lincoln*, Bar None-Restless, 24. **NITZER EBB**, *Belief*, Geffen, 25. **FULL FATHOM FIVE**, 4 A.M., Link, 26. **EASTERHOUSE**, *Waiting For The Redbird*, Columbia, 27. **JULIAN COPE**, *My Nation Underground*, Island, 28. **GUADALCANAL DIARY**, *Flip-Flap*, Elektra, 29. **POGES**, "Yeah, Yeah, Yeah, Yeah, Yeah," Island, 30. **THRASHING DOVES**, *Trouble In The Home*, A & M, 31. **MIDGE URE**, *Answers To Nothing*, Chrysalis, 32. **ROBYN HITCHCOCK**, *EGYPTIANS*, "Madonna Of The Wasps," A & M, 33. **BRIAN TRICKEY**, *Sonic Temple & Court Of Babylon*, TGA, 34. **MURPHY'S LAW**, *Back With A Bong!*, Profile, 35. **FRONT 242**, *Front By Front*, Wax Trax, 36. **ROY ORBISON**, *Mystery Girl*, Virgin, 37. **GO-BETWEENS**, *16 Lovers Lane*, Beggars Banquet, 38. **SAINTS**, *Prodigal Son*, TVT, 39. **HALF JAPANESE**, *Chained Life*, 50,000...000 Watts, 40. **HE SAID**, *Take + Care*, Mute-Enigma.

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SPINS



Madonna: Lady sings the blues.

Madonna *Like A Prayer* Sire

Christian Wright: In these songs Madonna addresses issues like family and love gone sour—all these things she's been through. She pours her guts out, talking about stuff that doesn't sit well in pop songs. "Till Death Do Us Part" is too autobiographical: "The bruises, they will fade away/You hit so hard with the things you say." In the past when she's

addressed issues the songs have still been danceable. You could enjoy their immediate effect and not think about it.

Joe Levy: There's not a lot of old Madonna, nothing of the generation of women who grew up in her wake: Regina, Debbie Gibson, Taylor Dane. There's one girly-disco song, "Keep It Together," which filters Sister Sledge's

"We Are Family" through "Into The Groove." It's the only great dance song on the record.

Christian: The fun she seems to have gotten out of life or success is missing. The celebration of "Causing A Commotion" or "La Isla Bonita." The exception is the duet with Prince, "Love Song." It's as far as pop superstardom can go, and they also sound really good together, better than Michael Jackson and Mick Jagger did. She's playing against a man, a very sexual man; there's a lot of sexual tension, especially in the line "Don't fog my mind." I had to look back at the lyric sheet because it sounded as though she sang "Don't fuck my mind." She sounds best with Prince because she's back in that very hedonistic environment.

John Leland: Over the years Madonna has emerged as a moralist. In the beginning she's the opposite—talking about celebration in "Holiday" or "Borderline" she's really not confronting the morals of it or caring what anyone else says about her. By the time she gets to "Papa Don't Preach" she's very moralistic, protecting not herself but the women in her audience from the censure of their parents or society. On *Like A Prayer* a lot of songs are like advice columns, like "Express Yourself," where she's just giving advice to an obviously younger girl. But I don't get the sense of a personal liberation. She's winning this liberation for her audience more than for herself. On the other hand, within this album and the way it's constructed I think there's a basic sense of triumph and self-worth. That she can indulge herself in all these different ways, that she can use different voices to address the audience, and that she expresses herself musically in ways that aren't overtly commercial

and aren't necessarily what people would want of her—all this gives *Like A Prayer* a strong sense of independence. You won't find this sort of breadth in a Janet Jackson record. Debbie Gibson writes her own songs, but you won't find her taking all these chances. Like Prince, Madonna is deliberately playing with people, giving them something that they don't want, or don't know that they want. For a woman to do this is a public triumph, one that declares itself as such before the record's even done. By taking the liberties that she does, she declares her right to take them.

Christian: In the past Madonna has been very inspiring in a physical way, speaking to her audience as a peer. It didn't matter how old you were—you could incorporate your own feelings into the feelings she expresses in her songs, so it's ageless. She manages to present female sexuality for the women in her audience rather than for the men so that it isn't just seductiveness or being attracted to Madonna that's sexy. Her records were really popular when I was in college, and all my girlfriends and I would be in the same room playing Madonna and there was this overwhelming feeling of happiness. Six girls in a room without feeling competitive at all—there was a very sexual tone to it. You're aware of yourself and you're aware of other girls, and not in a competitive way, but in a compassionate, appreciative way. On *Like A Prayer* your relationship to Madonna changes from song to song, and it makes you uncomfortable. It's like sitting at a table with a friend who's telling too much about himself to people she doesn't know. You want to take her aside and say, "Look, let's talk about the new clothes you got. Don't talk about this stuff."

John: But by now there is no such thing as a private life for Madonna, so it's impossible for her to be confessional. We don't learn any more about her private torment from *Like A Prayer* than we learned about her private sexuality in "Into The Groove." Where you expect this record to be voyeuristic: it's not. It's kind of like a distant appreciation.

Joe: If you lump all the past Madonna records together, and you can, my relationship to them has been based on pleasure—the pleasure of dancing or just listening to a song like "Borderline," where I think her voice sounds very sexy—and I've never gotten beyond that. My relationship to *Like A Prayer* is as a consumer. Certain songs make me feel like a customer, and certain songs make me feel like a smart appreciator. That duet with Prince is amazing and so is "Dearly, Dearly," which sounds like Prince doing Sgt. Pepper's, but it's amazing in this "Wow! This is neat!" sort of way.

—Joe Levy, Christian Logan Wright and John Leland



Guardian angels of the street b sat, Lisa Lisa and Cult Jam (l-r): Mike Hughes, Lisa Lisa and Spanador.

Lisa Lisa and Cult Jam *Straight To The Sky* Cumbio

It's not easy being an altar boy. You stand there holding this little plate under the chin of everyone who comes up for communion. The old people line up and stick out their tongues to receive, and the sight can be wicked repulsive. But in every communion line, there's always this waif, this angel, this remarkably cute girl who lowers her eyes, says "Amen," and offers her tongue, which looks even cooler reflected in the plate's brilliant gold.

Lisa Lisa was without doubt the Waif of her parish. Lucky for us, she grew up into America's Waif, trilling "I Wonder If I Take You Home" and "Head To Toe" in the guileless warble of a girl conducting a Sno-Cone. Her writers/producers Full Force have sung with Bob Dylan and produced James Brown—yes, these guys did a challenge. But their finest creation is their Waif, Lisa Lisa. Her blitheness shouldn't be mistaken for piety. St. Rose of Lima used

to rub raw pepper onto her face so that her beauty wouldn't threaten the chastity of others. I have no idea what Patrick Hernandez or Foxy did to their faces, but it probably wasn't that. Understand? Lisa's in the latter category—she was born to be alive, and her urban Catholic disco-pop is irretrievably sweet, unsullied by any trace of Madonna's guilt or dread.

Listening to her new LP is like watching her stick out her tongue, utterly clueless. I mean, she sings all the dirty lines totally straight. But she gets passionate sometimes—she just does it on the non-dirty lines, when her passion can't get her into trouble. She's often praised for this "distance" she keeps, but just as important is the enthusiasm she shows in her safe lines—the lines in which her sexuality is most shielded by pop anonymity. Remember how in "Ring My Bell," Anita Ward's most-sexy-sung line was "I'll put away the dishes"? That's pure Lisa.

Full Force, Cult Jam, and assorted other voices sing with or against her, and no, she ain't no diva. She doesn't sound

as free as Madonna or Xavier Gold do. Which means she never reaches her peaks of narcissistic transcendence. She keeps her bitch-muse on a tight leash. When I get all guilt- and dread-ridden after playing the new Rhino compilation of the Village People too often, *Straight To The Sky's* "Somebody New" is what calms me down. Disco died the first time around 'cuz the suffering world is jealous of the easy, free life of its own representations, and I think that's totally sad. The world won. Imagination lost. Sex died, and pop music became pious. Lisa Lisa's communal version of disco-disco is a compromise with the suffering world.

It's also fun revision of pop's Catholic tradition. Madonna's *True Blue* sampled James Cagney. Lisa's new album features a bad Bogart imitator saying "Here's looking at you, sweetheart." I can't wait till one of these papist penitents samples the great film *Girls Just Wanna Have Fun*, in which a waif ("Oh, 'Hail Mary'! Sorry, Sister, I thought you asked for 'Hail Mary'; but I do a great Tina Turner.") gets her big chance to boogie on "Dance TV"... you don't remember? Well, somewhere in purgatory, Ciccone Island babies like Tony DeFranco, Paul Westerberg and Jon Bon Jovi are playing it on the VCR. And when it's over, they're all gonna groove to Lisa Lisa. Amen.

—Robert Sheffield



Indigo Girls *Indigo Girls* Epic

Since their open mike days in Georgia clubs, this Atlanta female folk duo has carried remarkably little baggage: just a couple of acoustic guitars and voices that could shake redwoods. On their major-label debut (as on two earlier releases on their own Indigo label), Emily Saliers and Amy Ray wear Joni Mitchell's *Clouds* on their sleeves, and their music is only political insofar as it is personal. They seem content to look at the

world through the screens of their own interiors, using the first and second person (lots of "I's" and "you's")—their songs are more meditations or states of being than tall tales or short stories. More often than not, they'll toss in a Christian moral, such as "No one can convince me we aren't gluttons for our doom," in "Prince Of Darkness," or "We sit here in our storm and drink a toast to the slim chance of love's recovery," from "Love's Recovery."

Such medicine might be hard to swallow if it weren't for the sweetness of Indigo Girls' sound. Producer Scott Litt has taken care not to plug the open spaces with synthesizers, or any other unnecessary accompaniment, for that matter; he and the Girls have delivered an album that's self-consciously unmodern. Electric guitars, piano, and the occasional full band (R.E.M. and Hothouse Flowers each help out on a couple of tracks) never compete with the duo's sturdy harmonies and acoustics. Even the more relatively produced tracks—"Closer To Fine," "Tried To Be True" and "Land Of Canaan" with its spunky slide guitar—feel hushed. But the album's most powerful moment is "Kid Fears." Its vocal rondo and crescendos are boosted by the added voice of Michael Stipe, who bleeds emotion instead of art for a change. *Indigo Girls* may contain more gray than indigo, but its tones ring true.

—Karen Schoemer



George Jones
One Woman Man
Epic

Tammy Wynette
Next To You
Epic

Applesauce and potato pancakes. Trump and Tyson. Jeans and T-shirts. Hearts and minds. The Bronx and Manhattan. Cashews and lime beer. Anger and remorse. Love and hate. Beauty and despair. Pink and black. George and Tammy.

Vodka and cranberry juice. I'm drunk and I want to get in one of those gloriously pitiful moods when depression seems like a sacrament and skeletons in the closet make the most charming guests. It'll take a soundtrack that makes my heart sick while my brain lulls to acceptance. Richard and Linda Thompson and their Celtic-based intellectual wrist-slitting ditties just won't cut it tonight. I don't need to be smacked with the obvious. I'd rather listen to voices that have loved and been shat on, that have cheated and been cheated on, that realize that orgasm is just short-term pain made special by God's advertising agency. I'm in luck, both George Jones and Tammy Wynette have new albums. It's Pillar Time.

Forgiving him for some recent maudlin messes, caused by sobriety and marital bliss, no doubt, I start off with Jones's *One Woman Man*. That amazingly rangy voice is still all there, elevating Billy Sherrill's sappy production and the somewhat vapid material to undeserving heights. In case you didn't know it, George Jones is the greatest white singer in the world. Coked-up yuppie broads who turn out the lights and pretend that they're Aretha Franklin, or Fontella Bass if the coke's no good, may snub country music as "Haw-Haw" with strings, but I dare say that George Jones is every bit as soulful as Aretha. Now, I am drunk, but I've been known to make that assessment while sober, as well. His vocals on the title track practically jump rope with the melody line, such is his expressive range. A lot of people think the most regrettable thing Elvis Costello's ever done was to call Ray Charles a "blind, ignorant nigger." I think it's when he tried to sing George Jones songs on *Almost Blue*. Talk about being made a fool of by good intentions. Though Jones is singing about Presley on his album's best cut, the lyrics also apply to the other Elvis: "Yabba dabba do, the king is gone and so are you."

Like her former hubby Jones, Tammy Wynette hasn't lost it a bit. Even when this album's at its worst, on the sing-song inanity of "When A Girl Becomes A Wife," Tammy's shimmering vox rescues it to reasonability. If you think Cowboy Junkies country underkill soothes, take a hit of the real thing. Forever the victim—of hedonistic men, of progressive values and, in real life, of brutal ransomies—Tammy Wynette's records sound like therapy as she strips herself bare and says "you can never know the hurt I have inside." On such gut-slashing cuts as "You Left Memories Layin' (All Over the Place)" (a reworking of George's "The Grand Tour"), "The Note" and "Liar's Roses," you start to have fantasies of saving Tammy, of being the good man she always wanted, but never had. Or you just throw back another Cape Cod and let the

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Posse in effect, the A-Team was about to jump into the Batmobile (power steering, Landau roof) and roll.

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"Dag!"

Big Bob, president of the A-Team, slapped his hand on the table and turned to his friends, Swift and Dice. "At that price, don't you have to pay extra for the record reviews?" he asked incredulously. "Plus you get a free tape? Get the funk out of here."

Big Bob couldn't believe it. "A whole year of SPIN, delivered to my doorstep each month, for just \$15.95? Is there a method in their badness?"

Well, the whole A-Team was floored. Funkwizard Snow agreed that a deal like that was worth dropping out of law school for, even if this was his

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TAPE 2



ENIGMA

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Gomez Theory
Don Dixon
Close Lobsters
Wire
Velvet Elvis
Dream Syndicate
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Mojo Nixon
Nick Cave
Sonic Youth
Laibach
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Eric Ambel
Devo
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The Go-Betweens
Cocoteau Twins
Marc Almond
Lloyd Cole and the Commotions
Richard Thompson
The Thieves
The Relvers
Skinny Puppy
Johnny Clegg & Savuko

TAPE 4



Roy Orbison
E.U.
That Petrol Emotion
Inner City
Julio Fordhom
Sam Phillips
Maxi Priest
Neneh Cherry
Roxxy Gong
King Swamp

PLUS SPIN

one chance to get on the right side of the law. "That magazine is eckmarvelous, eckniculous, and then some!" he said. Then Big Bob smiled. He looks so handsome when he smiles.

Why was Big Bob smiling? He just realized that his paltry \$15.95 would get him not just 12 totally fat, dookie, dope issues of SPIN, but an equally fat, dookie, dope cassette of new music. Each tape is custom designed just for SPIN subscribers, with hot new bands like Fine Young Cannibals. It was too much.

"Dag!"

The A-Team hopped in the Batmobile and rolled out. Big Bob popped his tape in the system, and the A-Team rocked on, rocked strong, to the break of dawn. That is, on the happily ever after tip, boy-ee.

TAPE 5



Gipsy Kings
Shinehead
Starpaint
The Georgia Satellites
Billy Bragg
Le Mystere Des Voix Bulgares Vol. 2
Metallica
Dokken
The Sugarcubes
Metal Church
Kronos Quartet
Yaz
Super Lover Cee & Casanova Rud
Ruben Blades

TAPE 6



Matthew Sweet
Royal Court of China
Thrashing Doves
Joe Henry
One 2 Many
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—Michael Corcoran



The Neville Brothers *Yellow Moon* A&M

As their past few albums indicate, the Neville Brothers want to be more than a great New Orleans funk band. But their inability to create successful MOR urban contemporary radio jive should surprise no one, them least of all—when the kettle contains jambalaya, you can't serve it as beef stew. On *Yellow Moon*, instead of running from the bayou backbeat that makes them a distinguished group, the Nevilles let the funky rhythms flow where they may. And rather than confining their subjects to New Orleans eclecticism, love and the Bible, the Nevilles are overtly political. *Yellow Moon* is as natural a Neville Brothers album as can be, a rhythmic gumbo that smacks of fiery heat and subtle spicings.

The Neville Brothers are fighting despair and oppression on this album, and their main weapon is unity. The lead song, "Blood," melodic and percussive, with reeds evoking foreign lands, calls for blacks to recognize that the struggles in South Africa and in Haiti are a familial, a personal, abuse; their alignment with the American Indians can be seen as an affiliation with the oppressed everywhere. "Sister Rosa" and "Wake Up" are the two most expressly political songs; the first is a rap history lesson, the story of the woman who sparked the Civil Rights Movement, the second is empty rhetoric warning, "The superpowers better wake up." Though the Nevilles will win no Queens showings, their rap is not bad; they wisely sing the chorus.

Yet no matter how political they may

be, their decision to remake two Dylan songs comes from left field. The sardonic "God On Our Side" and the neo-realistic "Hollis Brown," both strong social commentaries (both from 1964's *The Times They Are A-Changing*—significant), become thoroughly Nevilleized, not with funky polyrhythms or African chants, but rather through Aaron's seraphic, celestial tenor. His voice—previously noted for syrupy singles like "Tell It Like It Is"—becomes as powerful as a thunderclap. In "Hollis Brown," Cyril's percussion is as precise as a hard shadow and Brian Stoltz's guitar perfectly evokes the sound of dust pinging against a barbed wire fence.

But it's the Brothers' forceful treatment of Sam Cooke's "A Change Is Gonna Come" that encapsulates this album's dual message: for human beings everywhere, oppression must stop; for the Neville Brothers here, determined to be more than fast-food blackened redfish, they will be outspoken black nationalists who beat their own drum to their own time.

—Robert Gordon

Christmas *Ultraprophets Of The Psychic Revolution* I.R.S.

Aaaaack! There's a cockroach on my turntable! It crawled out of the center hole of my Christmas record, and now it's spinning madly around, its antennae waving, like some creature on a psychedelic merry-go-round. That bastard Michael Cudahy, Christmas's sicko-brained singer and guitarist, is behind this, I know it. He bugged my record. He's hung up on bugs, this Cudahy. Creep. He even wrote a song on this album called "Richard Nixon." I grab a rolled newspaper. Ready. Set. Wait a minute, that rotating roach has a human head. With shaggy brown hair. And a slight double chin. Its little lips are singing along with "Richard Nixon" 's old King-Cole-was-a-merry-old-soul beat: "He's a trilobite with a cast-iron mask, he's the anti-Christ with a five o'clock shadow, tricky-dick he's sick with prickly paranoia."

"Who do you think you are." I snarl, "Jeff Goldblum? Franz Kafka? And how do you know all the words?"

"You called me a bastard a minute ago," says the roach-thing. "Turn this thing off, will you! And put some clothes on. We were only kidding when we said on the back sleeve that you should listen to the album while nude."

I throw on my Elvis memorial bathrobe. "I'm Cudahy," he says.

Chrysalis.

"She's bugging a reviewer from the Washington Post," it answers. "So what do you think of the album?"



"Good, good," says the Cudahy-roach. "And how does it compare to our last record, in *Excelsior Dayglo*, from 1986?"

"And the production?" quizzed the roach?

"Excellent," I respond. "Crisp, loud, creative. Acoustic guitars and surreal vocal blips flitting in and out of an apocalyptic metal miasma." I feel like Alice and the Caterpillar.

"And do you like the single, 'Stupid Kids'?"

"Loved it," I rave. "An anti-party anthem. Solid rock'n'rule."

"Write on!" exclaims the roach, scurrying off toward the center hole. "Well, I must away."

"Wait!" I say. "One more question! How did your head get onto a cockroach's body? And how did you get into my turntable?"

But it disappeared without a word.

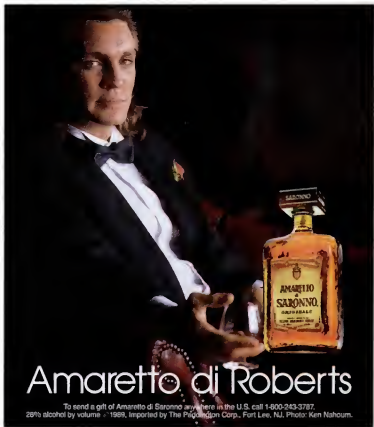
Purist friends of mine insist really good rockabilly (ca. 1989) can't be made by anybody under 40. At the very least, the Stray Cats could have stayed away the extra year or two it would have taken to test the theory. But instead, these three Long Island 'bilities have reconciled their irreconcilable differences and put their *burgeoning* post-Puss careers on hold to, as the accompanying press release brays, make "an album jam packed with a proven Stray Cats sound that has already made a place for itself in the marketplace." Yep, right between gasohol and Nacho Cheese Cap'n Crunch—two other ideas whose time somebody thought had come once upon a time.

For the bulk of the 80s, Phantom, Rocker and Setzer have pirouetted themselves silly trying to prove first that they were serious about being an 80s rockability band; then that they were a "real" band that played "some" rockability; and finally trying to prove they hated the "R" stuff altogether and (two-thirds of "em at least) wanted to be real rock stars so bad they'd even hook up with one of David Bowie's flunkies to make it. Since *Blast Off!* contains songs titled "Rockability World" and "Rockability Rules OK!" I think it's safe to assume we're back to step one in the above series. Dizzy yet?

Then how about imagining for a moment a remake (inferior barbershop harmonies and all) of the "Happy Days" theme. At least that's what "Bring It Back Again" sounds like. Maybe of Bri's pining over the MIA Erin Moran. That'd be like him. No such excuse exists, however, for "Gene and Eddie." Ostensibly a tribute to the Cats' two arch-influences, it ought to be about as embarrassing to Setzer now as his previous life as a Phil Manzanera-worshiper (in NYC's notoriously pretentious Bloodless Pharaohs) used to be, 'bein' that it's nothing more than a grade-schoolish pastiche of Gene Vincent and Eddie Cochran song titles strung together over Scotty Moore 101 riffage.

Some of *Blast Off*'s not offal, admittedly. "Nine Lives," while a mite close to "Stray Cat Strut," deserves an A for concept and "Gina," a strummin', sunny love ditty that could pass for an overlooked Marty Robins b-side from "fiftysomething," is bound to do your foot tappin' muscles some good.

But otherwise, *Blast Off!* sounds even more half-hearted than the Stray Cats original (so to speak) take on the rockabilly revival. This time, they're trying to revive once-removed, which as you know from any b&w horror flick, is somethin' you should never try.



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ALLROY'S REVENGE. ALL's second album delivers witty assaults on such essential subjects as ex-girlfriends, cars and sleep. "She's My Ex," the song to end all songs about ex-girlfriends will help you drive the final nail into the coffin of that doomed relationship. ALL puts the heavy pedal to the coxworthy pedal with their ALLstar cover of "Hot Rod Lincoln." (Cass/CD) **ALLROY'S REVENGE** is the next chapter in the pursuit of going for ALL and getting it ALL. After ALL, what else is there? (Sunday) **REVENGE!**

CHEMICAL PEOPLE



The second album from **CHEMICAL PEOPLE**, **TEN-FOLD HATE**, sounds so evil, so hateful that it burns like a living hell in your ear. How could such a frightening record come from three ever-giving bodiless? Drummer/Vocalist Dave Nuenen's propulsive rhythms are influenced by the pumping pulse lines that he and the band appreciate. Ed O'Neil boils the hell out of every bass line he plays, while the metallic crunch whirlop of James Price's guitar fires waves of sonic terror. But hey, this is Chemical People. What the hell did you expect? Lucid, fast and not groovy? No way, its "Cherry On A Sunday" for these boys. (Cass/Chemical or the download)

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Live Skull Positraction Caroline Records

From the stewing cauldron of gloom and the chilly icebox of enigma comes Live Skull's latest record, *Positraction*. It's a festering, appropriately black-colored slab of grinding, slash'n'drone stop me if you've heard these adjectives before) East Village-trash-shit-noisecluster rock.

Frequent comparisons to Sonic Youth and the decibel-happy downtown New York City crowd stem more from geographic and underground stereotyping than any musical similarities. Like those other "pigfuck" bands (a mock-genre created by reactionary critics) Live Skull emits an overtly "heavy," "fringe" attitude. But *Positraction* clearly shows that dissonance and outness are just elements within their (non-mainstream) pop song structures and sensibilities.

Positraction invokes a wealth of disparate musics, from the Byrds, the Psychedelic Furs (jangle/revisionary jangle, now post-revisionary) and Joe Jackson to Glenn Branca and sundry quality headbangers.

The signature sound from seven previous records remains: subtle but almost orchestrated guitar interplay drenched in chorus and reverberated overtones, straddling a thick and thudding rhythmic pound. The barbiturated feel that prevailed on prior albums has almost been replaced by rockier midtempo. There's a few surprises thrown in too, like a nifty harmonica groove on "Riches House," and a very nice John Caleish Middle Eastern modal drone at the beginning of "Caleb."

Vocalist Thalia Zadek benefits from a cleaner mix than before (with abrasion-mongers like Live Skull, this is often mistaken for increased "accessibility" or, for shame, commercialism). A lyric sheet is also included, a drastic change from the sparse packaging and murky din that always rendered the band's decidedly morbid themes an expressionistic grab bag.

The vagueness remains but the physical presence of the lyric sheet pushes Zadek and Skullmates' unequivocally grim worldview (if such narcissism can be called a worldview) into the forefront. Live Skull, particularly Zadek, are obsessed with The Modern Malaise and know how to drop howling vignettes of decay and alienation onto your already soiled party without degenerating into self-parody. The first verse from the first song sets the tone throughout: "There's a place/lets for you in my mind/like a hole." Classic couplet from "Riches House": "A change in the tension/just blew me out of my suspension/but the vacuum has no mercy/don't get sucked in my dysfunction."

Positraction conjures a hermetic world where dread reigns and demar-



Live Skull contemplating the power of positive thinking (l-r): Thalia Zadek, Mark C. Sonda Anderson, Rich Hutchins and Tom Paine.

cates boundaries far beyond the mere revelation of unpleasant truths. A battered psyche survives the barrage only to face an existence like a sieve, one that holds nothing.

The intensity of waiting for a sick friend to die ("Sunday Afternoon White-out") melds into ongoing, mundane dissipation. Betrayal and inertia dominate (replace) emotions and possession, among other strangers, has replaced the self: "My heart is in my throat/but I can't swallow, must spit it out/I am in the hands of a demon" ("Demon Rail").

With Zadek's psychic bedsores word-scabs Live Skull has found a drafty home within the walls of the citadel of pain, and further ghettoized their brand of bo-ho/lingre despair.

The unmitigated hopelessness and abrasion that defines bands like Live Skull often exasperates critics who seek some sort of emotional balance, some accurate representation of the flux and diversity of the world "out there." Live Skull is not a band to fulfill such a lofty responsibility. They've staked out the charred landscape of personal misery and emptiness as their stomping ground. Despite *Positraction*'s whiplash-inducing nods to hooks and sonic refinement, the monolithic approach of such committed grimness often lapses into pure tedium. But junkies and depressants need mood music too.

—Adam Quest

Nasty Rox Incorporated Cash ZTT/Warner Bros.

Trevor Horn may be the most important producer since George Martin, but recently his Midas touch has been more like Medusa's: Frankie Goes To Holly-

wood's second album flopped; Art of Noise left Horn's record company, ZTT, in a huff; and Frankie lead singer Holly Johnson sued the label, won, and ZTT paid court costs.

Horn has been forced to freelance, and although he and protégé Stephen Lipson coproduced two cuts on the last Pet Shop Boys album, few reviews of introspective mentioned that fact—except the same response to their production on the new Simple Minds. Nowadays sampling, which Horn pioneered on

NASTY ROX INCORPORATED



"Owner of a Lonely Heart," is available to any sympleton on ecstasy. "Pump Up the Volume" proved that drum programming really was "a piece of piss" (as Horn had always insisted) and that it was impossible to distinguish the bogus and the bona fide.

Enter Nasty Rox Incorporated, ZTT's latest "Next Frankie," an attempt to imitate Horn's imitators with one last, imitable smorgasbord of rap, funk, metal, glam and posthead-Paul McCartney production. The first single, "Escape From New York," was a seeming bite of "Pump Up the Volume"'s "Courageous Cat" bass line. (In fact, "Escape" was written with M/A/R/R/S's Dave Dorrel and Martyn Young before "Pump Up the Volume.") Unfortunately, "Escape" took so long to produce that it was

tagged as passé when it came out in early '88. ZTT sat on the project for a year—which is why Nasty Rox will self-produce their next album for Warners—but their debut album, *Cash*, (which early press releases promised would be called *Led Zep II*) still makes the Chili Poopers sound like Huey Lewis and the Beasties like Barry Manilow. It's not just homeboy rap, it's music. Remember, this is a Trevor Horn production.

Which means it's also entertainment. Nasty Rox are full of themselves, to say the least; the first song isn't merely "8th Wonder" (as in of the world), but "9th Wonder." It's followed by "10th Wonder," an even stranger brew of Sly Stone beats, James Brown braggadocio, George Benson chords, Jimmy Page solos, salsa horns and progrock arrangements. They also like to play the rock-star-as-fascist. In one song lead singer Dan Fox packs an Uzi, in another he threatens to "put a bullet in your brain," in still another he claims to have "violence and crime all around me." Phrases like "we rock harder than you'll ever know" and "I'm laying down the law," capture that classic, salami-in-the-span-dex rock aura.

Since Nasty Rox aren't metal morons or rap retards, the pistol imagery is harmless sexual innuendo, and the paramilitary jargon is balanced by lines like "Hotter than chili that's been left out in the sun." As literal as rock gets without being Spinal Tap, the chorus to "Say It, Mean It" is simply: "Say it (Say it) just like you mean it/Say it like you mean it but I know you don't." Likewise, "Escape From New York" samples Chuck Brown's declaration: "I need some money."

Such blunt desperation for moolah makes for some very up-to-the-minute music, where 70s hard rock thrills dovetail with 80s dance floor insights. Backed by the world's greatest drummer, Keith Lebane, and M&A/R/S's turntable sampler, C.J. Mackintosh, Nasty Rox Inc.—in the glorious tradition

of Bad Co.—even have an eponymous corporate anthem, which Fox says is a "piss-take on all the rappers who go around saying how big their dicks are."

Like all Horn productions, *Cash* is padded with instrumentals. "Nobby's One"—which sounds like the theme from "The Streets of San Francisco"—is ingenious, while "Wooba Wubbaa II"—Art of Noise piano pasted onto the drums from "When The Levee Breaks"—is merely ingenious. All in all, however, you gotta love a band that's opened for James Brown (but uses a drum machine in concert), and which nicknames their bassist "Leo T" and their guitarist "King ND" (just so it rhymes when Fox introduces them in "Escape From New York"). And you also gotta love an album that wanted (and almost deserves) to be called *Led Zep II*.

—Bob Mack

Steeleye Span Now We Are Six Shanachie

It's folkly time in the late 80s and this merry reissue of Steeleye Span's 1974 *Now We Are Six* reminds us not only that England had folk music before the US had folks, but that folk-rock can really rock—in contrast to most of the revolutionaries everyone's been talking 'bout recently. Late 60s Fairport Convention was the first group to electrify and expand the pastoral pain of traditional Celtic material, mixing its pagan whispers and horny jigs with Dylan, rock'n'roll and California dreamin'. With the enticing request of a more purist grail, bassist Ashley Hutchings quit Fairport in '69 and formed Steeleye Span, conjuring up another folkier, moodier Prior, whose plaintive vox is the equivalent of, say, the piercing gaze of a fair

Amaretto di Armitage

96 proof 40% alc/vol. Imported by The Paddington Corporation, Fort Lee, NJ. Photo: Ken Nahoum.

maiden's eyes through murky woods in moonlight.

By the time of *Now We Are Six*, Hutchings had quit again and Steeleye had added the raunchier proclivities of Robert Johnson and Rick Kemp, thickening the airs and ballads with distortion and beastly bass. The result was an enticing retro-fusion of Brit folk's archaic hooks, Prior's witchy timbre and the kind of evil slush fuzz that helped make the early 70s what it was no less a surprise that Jethro Tull's Ian Anderson helped produce the album). The spectral

earth-jazz of "Drink Down The Moon" features snatches of the hilariously bawdy "Cuckoo's Nest," and the harmonies on the hit "Thomas the Rhymer" rock as much as the beat. The first few moments of "Edwin" sound like the song's about to get up and get its ass over to Sabbath Volume 4 and the tune that precedes it really kicks out the jigs. Fairport never got this heavy. There are some anomalies here: two useless though brief piano-vocal ditties and a funny cover of Phil Spector's teen-wail "To Know Him Is to Love Him," replete with David

Little Suttys' Quest for Music by Mark Blackwell

HA, SUTTY! I'M REMINISCING ABOUT THE GREAT, YET DEAD, MUSIC OF THE LATE 70s. I WANT TO BRING SOME BACK IN MY TIME MACHINE. BUT WHO? THE JAM? CLASH? ELVIS COSTELLO? SEXY PISTOLS?

WELL, SCIENTIST, NO NEED TO GO GET ELVIS. HE'S BACK AFTER TWO YEARS WITH A GREAT NEW ALBUM CALLED "SPIKE".

YES, YES, BUT HIS LATER WORK IS SOMEWHAT BLAND AND DIFFICULT TO ENJOY.

SURE HE HAD A COUPLE OF PORTRAITS OF THE ANGRY YOUNG MAN AS AN ARTIST SORT OF DUDS, BUT WITH "KING OF AMERICA" HE REVIVED. SPIKE IS SIMILAR TO KING, YET MUSICALLY MORE DIVERSE. HERE HE COMES OFF AS JUST A GUY WHO LIKES TO CREATE GOOD, POTENT SONGS LIKE HE DID IN HIS YOUNG DAYS.

SPIKE IS ELVIS AT HIS BEST, A SHARP MIND POINTING A SHARP FINGER AT THE WORLD AROUND HIM. IT'S NO TIME TRIP BACK TO "ARMED FORCES," BUT NOBODY WITH ANY SENSE EXPECTS THAT.

YES, YES, BUT I HAVE YET ANOTHER PROBLEM AT HAND, EARLIER IN MY TESTING THE LEVER SLIPPED FROM "MUSICIAN" TO "MAGICIAN" AND... WELL...

SUTTY, I'D LIKE YOU TO MEET MR. DOUG HENNING.

AAAAH, YES! (THIS MUST BE SOME KIND OF MAGNIFICENT ILL-OOOSON!) (PROGRESS IS INDEED A MIXED BLESSING.)

DATE DISPLAY: 1978

—MARK BLACKWELL—

Bowie's sax. Now *We Are Six* is great. But then I'm a sucker for anything that spins noise, melancholy and titles like "Two Magicians" and "Seven Hundred Elves" round me turntable's revolving may-pole.

—Erik Davis

Metal Church Blessing In Disguise Elektra

White Zombie Make Them Die Slowly Caroline

The debate has long raged (among people with nothing productive to fill their leisure time, at least) as to what exactly was the first heavy metal record. Most folks seem to favor "You Really Got Me," or *Led Zep I*. Me, I'm kinda partial to Mr. Acker Bilk's "Stranger On The Shore," but that's pretty irrelevant, especially when you consider that the question we should be asking is who's gonna make the last — the ultimate — heavy metal record.

Well, since Acker Bilk's shuffled off this mortal coil, the always-pleasing full-circle thing is outta the question. Not to worry, though, there's plenty of potential successors, all yammering that they're the ones who'll relegate all others to the boneyard. Which, as you know, is bunk.

In most cases, Like Metal Church's, for example. A few years ago, cognoscenti were whispering about a "new Metallica" being hatched in the Pacific Northwest: punk roots, a bald guy with a beard... in short, all the stuff you've come to expect from any post-apocalypse electro-shock combo to whom you'd offer your ears for the buffeting. At one point, Metal Church lived up to the hype, but judging by such sub-Styxian mystic melodrama as "Badlands," they'd poby' just give yer lobes a spit-shine and leave 'em outside your door in the a.m. Said track is "marked" (y'know, like a dog) by layers of the Jose Feliciano-metal geeter you heard enough of the first time you heard Eddie Van H. get sensitive.

Sonically, at least, a lot of the problem lies with new vocalist Mike Howe, an air-raised screamer who promises to make Metal Church Maidenfan-friendly. Howe can't shoulder all the blame, though. Potshots at TV preachers ("Fake Healer") and "the authorities" ("Of Unsound Mind") are not only heavy-handed, but about five years too late. And the misunderstood first-person monologues about journeying through alien lands (but emerging with values intact) went out with vaudeville. Or Rush.



Servants of Satan and possessors of really cool hair, White Zombie (l-r): Joy Yueneger, Sean Yseult, Rob Zombie and Ivan DePrume.

White Zombie, on the other hand, are out there five years yonder in some post-nukes landscape where metal can really add! It really is all the things it's been denying these back decades (the evil, suicide-inspiring, drug-drenched ravings of servants of Satan, that is). Make Them Die Slowly belies any trace of the NYC East Village anti-damage that (a) kicked the shins out of their first singles and (b) lurked in the corners of Psycho-Head Blow-Out and Soul-Crusher. And that, quite obviously, is a good thing. Surface reasons for the coarsening tho' that's the precise term for what's happened here) include frontman Rob Straker's transformation from Lucifer-tongued Nick Zed! extra to outright bitch-magnet metal god, and perhaps more importantly, procurement of a producer who's known for doing more to using the studio as a home base for pot rars.

Bill Laswell, said producer, brings with him the simultaneously sane and heavy sound he's so fond of (c.f. *Motörhead's Orgasmatron*), and it works wonders. Laswell, the story goes, was sic-ed on the band by longtime White Zombie fan Iggy Pop. Not too surprising, considering the similarities "between Zombie and the Stooges at their most free-jazz." "Godslayer," which comes off as some bizarre fusion of, say, "We Will Fall" and "LA Blues," evinces this best on Make Them Die Slowly. That song, and "Power Hungry"—one twisted mind-fuck of percolating bass and wind-shear vocal snippets—approach Zombie-sound of yore. The rest? Even better.

Straker, writing in full sentences now, scores with scads of cyberpunk black humor on "Disaster Blaster," probably the most erotic thing to be swathed in metal since Samantha Fox did that aluminum fol pictorial... but that's another story. "Demonspeak" and

"Murderworld" swagger in a similarly anarcho-Steppenwolf fashion. Both of 'em are multi-part opuses (song lengths alone could make this White Zombie's... And Justice for All—shortest clocks in well over five minutes) that move easily from white noise amphetamine to biker sneer, partly due to Laswell's Marley Marl-like splice technique and partly as a result of Straker's shamanistic moaning/peaking and yodeling all over the place. "This is a murderworld, brutha," he lows on the song's chorus, sounding for all the world like a pimp-stuffed street-corner preacher due to break into a Travis Bickle soliloquy at any moment. Scary.

In the most basic terms, Make Them Die Slowly might not be the metal LP to end all metal LPs—at least not any more so than *Paranoid* or *Killing Technology*, to name but two MLP's to end all MLP's—but it's damn likely to give you more nightmares and chuckles than anything else money can buy you these days.

—David Sprague

Mothers of Invention Absolutely Free Rykodisc

Frank Zappa Waka/Jawaka Rykodisc

Frank Zappa & the Mothers of Invention One Size Fits All Rykodisc

One of Lester Bangs's smartest remarks was that Frank Zappa is only interesting

as long as he's hipper than you are. Frank's true constituency consists of precocious adolescents and his schtick becomes progressively tougher to cherish as you move away from your central teen years. For a certain age group, however, Zappa is king. Almost all of my close friends had teenage fixations on the guy's stuff, but I'd have a tough time finding any who've heard much of his output from the last 15 years. Listening to these three releases, it's easy to understand why: Zappa has changed very little over the course of his 25-year career, it's his audience that has continuously evolved and moved on.

In junior high school, *Absolutely Free* seemed like an unbelievably anarchic and virtuous record. Towards the end of my high school career, *Waka/Jawaka* appeared to be (along with *The Grand Wazoo*) part of Frank's return to a "more serious," pre-Flo & Eddie film. In the midst of college, *One Size Fits All* was a pasty puff of post-union joke-rock and the last Zappa record I ever bought.

A decade and a half after this most recent purchase, hipper now than a bucking toilet, I can see that these releases're not as different as all that. My horrified reaction to the flashy guitarwork in "Inca Roads" (from *One Size*) was totally incongruent with my non-grudging acceptance of it during "Invocation & Ritual Dance of the Young Pumpkin" (on *Absolutely Free*). By expecting Zappa's musical interests and scope to mature apace with my own, I was simply asking too much.

It's not that Frank's talent dissolved the way that Lou Reed's did, it was simply arrested at a certain stage. In the fall of '67 he only had to compete inside my head with bands like the Byrds and Jefferson Airplane (neither of whom were great form destroyers). By the spring of '75 his rivals were Can, Faust and various others who had taken some of his more interesting destructive impulses and run with them. The Mothers were still so content with shaking up 13-year-olds that they didn't stand a chance.

My initial responses to these records still hold true, but the reactions may be more emotional than logical. *Absolutely Free* is a very listenable, somewhat archaic period piece that opened a lotta young brains to multi-part song structure and wild-ass parody. *Waka/Jawaka* is an understated '70s effort that makes me wish Frank had teamed with a small combo containing Sneaky Pete Kleinow, Aynsley Dunbar, Ernoeone and Don Preston. *One Size Fits All* is a minor, dull wall of funk-rock which reminds me of how boss "You Are My Soul" sounded when Flo & Eddie were in the Mothers. These are the views of a long-jaded cuss. For people who entered the picture later, it may all sound seminal.

So blow me down, son.

—Byron Coley

SPIN OFFS

THE CHILLS *The Lost E.P.* (Homestead)

When the Chills dubbed this platter *The Lost E.P.* in 1985, they were being cryptic. Martin Phillipps and phase eight of his lineup had been listening to a lot of Pebbles compilations and, I suspect, smoking a different grass than New Zealand sheep graze; the only things lost on this record are the band's minds occasionally, in an exultant haze of rock'n'-roll. To a certain degree, the record's name was prophetic: it took four years for it to get released in the States, after all. Some the stridently sophomoric material here—60s psychedelia squeezed through 80s post-punk—must sound awfully silly to Phillipps now; it does to me. Nevertheless, even Chills trash is great trash. Whether he's investing nonsense words with lyrical portent or spewing a crush confession over seven couplets, Phillipps' twisting of words and music is inspired. "This Is The Way" slides through its chord progressions, the guitar leading us through the song's haunting construction. I suspect even the Music Machine would have been proud to have had a gem like this under their guitar straps.

—Evelyn McDonnell

THE PASADENAS, *To Whom It May Concern* (Columbia) Signed by the same man who signed Terence Trent D'Arby, the Pasadenas present a congruent proposition: soul as style, bass as motivation even if not liberation. But where D'Arby presented himself as the soul man reincarnate, this English quartet loses itself in the romance of the vocal group, where the ease of anonymity is a mixed blessing; they still sound more like the 60s than the Pasadenas. Given that limitation, though, they can wax. When they throw Jackie Wilson's and Smokey Robinson's names around, it's as fans rather than heirs. Seems less tightly footnoted than the Fine Young Cannibals, but also less charismatic.

—John Leland

LAKIM SHABAZZ, *Pure Righteousness* (Tuff City) Hip hop forces for 1989 (among others): (1) The righteousness

and intellectual rigor of Islam, and (2) The dope beats of ascendant producer Mark the 45 King. This record rocks with both fronts, as words and samples compete for progressively smaller bytes of turf. Simultaneously sacred and profane, this is information overload. Sometimes Lakim Shabazz is bad because he's righteous, sometimes just because he's bad. A lifetime of living compressed onto one cassette, this is heaven and hell and history crushed into a signal you can dance to.

—John Leland

VARIOUS PERFORMERS, *Pay It All Back Volume 2* (Netwerk) Turned loose, the industrial dub mixes of English producer Adrian Sherwood spray bass and paranoia all over the place, re-defining roots as something like a third world toxic waste dump. This compilation—with cuts by African Head Charge, Dub Syndicate, Mark Stewart and others—turns them loose.

—John Leland



SIMPLY RED *A New Flame* (Elektra) As jazz-soul this is sweet, gorgeous, seductive: less accomplished than Anita Baker, but more passionate. As real soul, this isn't the second coming of the Stylistics. Still, the slow ones have a plaintive, sunny ache that Mick Hucknall's voice emotes into a thing of substance.

—Joe Levy

TESLA, *The Great Radio Controversy* (Geffen) Smack in the middle of side one there's one brilliant, good timin' moment. Guitarists Frank Iannoni and Tommy Stinson forget bad-ass histrionics and grind into "Be a Man," a fine Gibson strut of jubilation. Vocalist Jeff Keith is all adolescent bobcat yelps and "yeah, yeah, yeah!"s. Why do men always make the Something Smells Bad face when they play a song like this? Who cares! This is hard rock's call to the Party, and it will compel anyone with a butt to wiggle and huff and leap around playing air to all eight solos. This sort of party rock mis-behaviorism may be a little disgusting, but that doesn't mean I don't enjoy rolling around in it occasionally. Shine on me, arena lights of redemption.

—Pat Blashill

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LOWLAND

*Sub Pop 200,
Sigmund Und Sein Freund,
Jack Starr,
A-Bones,
Moods of Elvis,
Antiseen,
Finnish Rock,
Skeletons,
Flesh & Bones*

Column by **Byran Coley**

There has seldom been a survey of a local scene as varied, comprehensive and generally boss-sounding as Seattle's Sub Pop 200 (\$15 ppd. Sub Pop, 1932 1st Ave. #1103, Seattle, WA 98101)—a box set with three EPs, a large-format booklet and a very handsome cover illustration by Charles Burns. A few known bands aren't present (U-Men, Skinnyyard, etc.), but most everybody else you've ever heard of from Seattle's on there, along with several new-to-me names. It's great to hear the sound of old faves like the *Walkabouts* (the uncrowned royal family of feedback-strum-stun) and the *Fastbacks* (one of America's longest-lived classique punk-pop units) nestled amongst that of such hep upstarts as *Mudhoney* and *Tad*. There's also a spoken word piece, the power-soundtrack-spew of *Steve Fisk*, and a whole lotta other worthwhile gobbling. Some of those NW bands whose propensity for revo-turd vocals have bothered me in the past show no signs of repenting, but what the heck? Variety is the bugaboo of nobody. I swear.

A recent movement to which I've paid almost no attention is the Belgian "Nieuw-Beat" thing. Lowland disco revisionism is about as appealing as customized fart-lighters, but I recently discovered that the stuff's not all syndrums and ass blisters. My case in point is a weird little combo called *Sigmund Und Sein Freund*, whose new mini-LP, *Innate* (Antler, J. Tielemansstraat 38, B-3220 Aarschot, Belgium), has a beat, but it's all drugged-up sounding and stuttery. And it gets knocked down by slash-waves of guitars (or maybe pseudo-guitars) making "futi" noises, while some keys get punched loose from some board, and some angry guy shouts in an unlovely way. There's a lotta bass rumbling somewhere and this is sockodolic



The A-Bones throw down.

in the same way that good dub is. And it's not gonna make me dance or anything, but if I was predisposed to that sorta activity and drunk as a collier, who knows?

Those keeps from *Kicks* fanzine sure know how to pull the gnarliest fossils outta the impacted colon of American kulchur. Not content to coast on such prior finds as Hasil Adkins's demos or Esquerita's acetates, they have now dug up a shrimp-mashing array of growl by an unimaginably obscure Texan named *Jack Starr*. *Born Petrified* (Norton, Box 646, Cooper Station, New York, NY 10003) is a lobe-pummeling set of ultra-primitive rockin' partially recorded in his parents' bathroom in the late 50s! One side is pre-Beatles-style ranting done up cruder than a black bark donut, the other is mid-60s garage-spuh that mixes almost-ballads with weird, loud mannequin. The songs come interspersed with ads and soundtrack bits from Jack's

homemade horror flicks. This is a deep dig into a real twisted canyon.

Also new on Norton is a ranking new EP by label founders, the *A-Bones*. *Free Beer For Life!* contains six cool mouthfuls of fluid-plug, some of which have been crowd-teasing live set staples for many a moon. The band's traditional irresponsibly pulsing melds with a foamy new wham-bar guitar sound; you can ride this hawg like a 20-foot "brickie." There shoulda been more vocals by Miriam Linna, but then there should always be more vocals by Miriam.

Any number of people have been sad ever since *Jad Fair*'s 1988 *Moods of Elvis Calendar* went out of date. Well, now all you crybabes can wipe those tears away, grab your bookstarr, and pony up for Jad's new booklet, *"Moods of Elvis Alphabet"* (\$4. Cool Guy's Art School, c/o Fair, Box 143, Westminster, MD 21157). Every letter is represented

by a page full of Elvis himself showing you what being human is all about. He's moody, he's ornery, he's dreamy. Elvis is feeling and looking different every dang time you turn around. There's a handy glossary to help you decipher every nuance of his sullen mug. Very fine reading.

Anybody with half a lip'll tell ya that Antiseen produces the brashnest punk-crunk money can buy. And in the last month or so there's been a truly purse-strapping amount of vinyl flowing outta these North Carolinians' maws. First up is the band's long-awaited *Honour Among Thieves* LP (Chopper/Bonafide, PO Box 185, Red Lion, PA 17356). Recorded a few years back, this rec bulges so convulsively that you'll be skittering for cover when it rips across your needle. The vocals, guitar and rhythm section all scream with total power. If hardcore hadn't happened, and punk bands had evolved through power rather than speed, this is where it would've ended. Also out is a 7-inch version of Antiseen guitarist Joe Young's "Bury the Needle" (Ajax, PO Box 146822, Chicago, IL 60614), previously reviewed here as a cassette and still a fuzzy-psycho blast of biker-blue-guitar-churn. Plus, there are two new EPs by singer Jeff Claydon's other bands, Judas Bullethead and the Slimegoats (both Death Train c/o Clayton, Rt. 3, Box 234E, New London, NC 28127) which are (respectively) cracked-up and finely-scunged extensions of the band's beefy arm. Start counting those pennies, sport.

Prior to the worldwide thrash explosion of '82/'83, nobody knew squat about Finnish bands. So, along come ultra-fast, ultra-skuzzy, aggropunks like Terveet Kadet and Lama, but even they peter out after a while and Finland is left cipherous once again. Well, a company called Room Service (PO Box 361, 00121 Helsinki, Finland) is trying to change all that (with a newspaper called *Ratheat* (\$2 ppd.) and its own label, Ga Ga Goodies. As Room Service tells it, Finland is crawling with grunchoid combos indebted to bands like the Nomads, movies like "Faster Pussycat! Kill! Kill!" and books like *Reform School Girl*. From this distance it's impossible to tell how wholly manufactured this image is, but some documentably good bands have come out of the PR project. Chief among them is Electric Blue Peggy Sue and the *Revolutions From Mars*. With roots in the thrash generation, EBPSATRFM take Stooges-style pumice, force its yammering head into a Gun Club kinda swamp stew, then whip the bloated mess up to punk speed. Their new LP, *But When You Talk About Revolution* (sic), mashes these elements so tightly to the band's chest that everything worms its way under the skin and the sound that emerges is almost like a Dangerhouse

burst of vein-splat. And if that's what their thing truly sounds like, well, jeez, you just about gotta endorse it.

Yipes! It seems that the defunct *Skeletons* (Springfield, Missouri's primest export) were so jazzed by the reaction to their recent vault-clearing compilation, *Rockin' Bones*, that they decided to get back together and cut new wax. The result, *In the Flesh* (Next Big Thing, 20 Albert Ave., Grangemouth, Stirlingshire FK3 9AT, Scotland) is a solid, party-time hoot. Like the 60s frat rock giants who prefigure them, the *Skeletons* play music designed for sheer listening pleasure. They jump from style to style like a quintet of kangaroos with hot coals in their pouches, but whether they're pounding out an original like "Primitive" or weeping their way through a Sonny Bono cover, their aim is always true. They're a lot like a groovier version of NRBQ or something, and if you can't dig that, well give it up, dad.

If your project of the day is screwing up your eyes with printed material, you could do a lot worse than sending three bucks for a copy of the new *Flesh & Bones* fanzine (351 Beechwood Ave., Middlesex, NJ 08846). Jeff, the editor, likes a buncha stuff I'd just as soon piss on as read about, but there's still plenty of goodness to wreck your peepers with: great interview with cartoonist J.D. King, who reads a few old, very embarrassing letters from Sonic Youth's Thurston Moore; probably the best live review section ever printed in any magazine; good trash-movie section; a swell guide to mind-numbing inhalants, and so on and so forth. It's exactly the sorta thing your parents are afraid you're reading.

There seems to be a 7-inch revolution going on now. A couple of years ago Australia looked like the only country capable of worthy 45s, but there've been all manner of fine wee 'uns floating my way lately. One of the best is "Shake Your Dick/Strangle Me" by the *Strungulated Beatoffs* (Firefighter, PO Box 220, Florissant, MO 63032), the first effort by former Drunks With Guns leader Stan Seltrich. A couple my friends complain that it's too basic, but the sensitive thrubbing that goes on here is not the sorta thing I'd like to miss. Also was spanky when from Missouri is the debut 7-inch by *Mudhead*, "The Jumbo Sound of Mudhead" (Mudhead, PO Box 30331, Kansas City, MO 64112). The songs on here combine the mid-east-hellation-whine of Savage Republic with Beezlebubbic vocal sneetches and a Live Skullish take on the world-at-large. It all sounds groovy and you should buy it now since you'll have to kill for it later.

In for a penny? In for a pound? I'll take them both, thanks. PO Box 301, W. Somerville, MA 02144.

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DANCING LIPS

Column by John Leland

In 1988, as Brian Chin points out in the liner notes to the excellent *Gotta Have House* compilation (Profile), Chicago house musicians found themselves in a bind: Spurned by the major labels in America, they began to make increasingly uncommercial music for England's rabid acid house market. Led by Phuture, whose "Acid Trax" put the subgenre on the map by giving a name and logo to a long-standing tradition in dance music, the Chicago acid house crowd abandoned rhythm and blues and moved to totally underground, into the inhuman ecstasy of electronic experimentation. Acid house, like its Detroit counterpart, techno, put a premium on the weird, as if evolution was racing toward a dangerous technological fusion before the end of the night.

At the same time—or an hour earlier, if you count the time difference—dance producers in New York and New Jersey brought house into the mainstream, reshaping it so it didn't necessarily fascinate so much as motivate. Bringing back the swinging bass lines of the late disco era—Grace Jones, Gwen Guthrie—they pushed house back into the rhythm and blues canon. It was a neat dichotomy, a tension for club deejays to avoid and exploit.

By the spring of 1989, the lines are no longer clear. As records like Rob Base's "R! Takes Two" and "Get on the Dance Floor" reassert hip hop's power as dance music, the house aversion to rap has broken down; and with it, the hip hop aversion to house. Acid house has moved closer to the mainstream. With Macy's celebrating spring with a window display of smiley face T-shirts, the mainstream has also moved closer to acid house. And Ten City, armed with classic R&B vocal group dynamics and a sentimental attachment to real instruments, is leading the Chicago prod of the deep house trend. Their foundation album (Atlantic) features the sexiest music about monogamy since Al Green, and the most compelling combination of gospel and disco since Sylvester.

On the hip hop front, the two best-selling rap singles of the late Eighties are Salt-n-Pepa's "Push It"—a dance re-



cord—and Tone Loc's "Wild Thing"—a novelty West Coast rap that is now the biggest-selling single since "We Are the World." Which means that in 1989, the b-boys will be rethinking things. The boundaries are down; economics—for forward-thinking independent labels like Quark, Big Beat, Profile, Criminal, DJ International, and Trax—are good enough to sustain a cynic's belief in the 12-inch single. You couldn't ask for more promising conditions for the rise of adventurous, motivating, commercial dance music. It just keeps getting more exciting.

Some samples:

Tyree featuring Kool Rock Steady, "Turn Up the Bass" (DJ International)
Devastating as a house jam, the track doesn't describe music so much as sheer momentum—momentum enough, in fact, to fit a mediocre rap with the power of a sustained mantra. Two lines in, Kool Rock Steady's voice functions like the 89th key on the piano. Producer Tyree Cooper sets the groove in motion, then bombards it with a history of house notations, but even the trippy acid noodlings don't turn this into architecture; in a stylistic coup, he converts the stasis of acid

into motion. Like most dance records you'll hear in 1989, this samples the beat from Rob Base's "It Takes Two" (actually, it's from Lyn Collins's 1972 "Do Your Thing") and Public Enemy's "Bring the Noise."

Inner City, "Good Life"/"Big Fun" (Virgin)
Detroit producer Kevin Saunderson, who is now stating as strong a case for the future of black pop as anybody, does the unlikely: grafts an actual song onto a techno groove. It is a haunting marriage; the beat never opens up to accept the song. The beat is all electronic but the vocal all human. In their intersection Saunderson finds a technological utopia.

Adeva, "Respect" (Chrysalis)
As deep as deep house gets, even if the piano colors more than it drives, this is the sound of New Jersey, where dancers pack Newark's Zanibar club to hear an older, more soulful disco. Adeva wails with the righteous fury of someone who expects never to win her just reward, and the bass drives the jam with the power of a trailer-sized heartbeat. Which sounds conventionally solid, un-

til the off-kilter coloration pushes the sound loose from its center, into ecstasy, then allows everything to collapse around that fat bass. Then it sounds like a war between evolution and the big bang.

Neneh Cherry, "Buffalo Stance" (Virgin)
A product of London trend culture, this single, named the best of 1988 by *The Face*, fails as often as it succeeds—Neneh Cherry shouldn't rap—but its successes more than redeem its failures. Goaded on by Bomb the Bass's stylized production and a couple of hooks sweet enough to seduce an actual buffalo, Cherry moves through this as through a video: with excellent attitude and even more excellent hair. Like its antecedent, Malcolm McLaren's "Buffalo Gals," this triumphs more for its transgressions than for its verisimilitude. And like "Buffalo Gals," it triumphs hard.

Donna Allen, "Joy and Pain" (Oceana/Atlantic)
With an electronic cowbell and fake strings to die for, this reconstructs both poles of Frankie Beverly's disco staple as invitations to eventual orgasm. Bourgeois by default and openly sensual by design, Allen's reading is a seduction, as alluringly escapist as Paul Hardcastle's similar "Rain Forest," but a lot sexier. The songs above try to explode your head; this one bathes it.

Chanelle, "One Man" (Profile)
Classic disco, with the gospel roots understated and the melodrama vamped so far that the medium holds more meaning than the message, this record has legs it doesn't even know about yet. And it knows about a lot of legs.

THE A-LIST:
Marley Marl, "The Symphony" (Cold Chillin'/Warner)
Maurice, "This Is Acid (A New Dance Craze)" (Vendetta)
Eric B. & Rakim, "The R" (Uni/MCA)
Clubb, "So Hot" (Bassment)
Jesus Jones, "Info Freako" (Food)

would do an outline, you start to become more aware of the technical limitations of songs. And then willfully go ahead and try to put something into a song which really is too big to be in a song. But I think it's worth the risk because if you put enough information and enough images in to tell the story to your own satisfaction, a listener—one that's prepared to listen for six minutes, you know, but there aren't too many—can get the whole story; it's all there to be put together. Or they can make an even better story out of it because they've got their own imagination.

Talking about it always makes it sound much duller. Describing making a record is never as much fun as it is to do it. 'Cause you have this high-wire act going on: "Are we gonna fall off at any moment?" Same with writing a song. You've no idea when you start whether you're gonna get it done unless it's something very very simple and very definite like a "Let Him Dangle" type song. Where you've got a story, you've got to get that information across, and you don't need lots of ambiguity, lots of clever phrasing of the subject, you need to say it. Or like "Tramp the Dirt Down," which you mentioned at the beginning, where it just comes out as a reaction to the way you feel about something and there's nothing much you can do about it. You don't try and balance it up and make it a nice reasonable argument. I don't want it to be a nice fucking argument, I want it to be horrible. I don't even want it to be anything. It just is. Some things just are.

Does it make you happy, what you do?

Yeah! I'm having a ball. It's better than being down a mine. I went for a job as an Admiralty Chart Corrector, the first job I ever went for. Do you know what that is? They have these government offices and they get all the charts off ships and you get tracings from the Admiralty, the naval authority, and you have to lay them over the charts of the waterways, and if there's been any new wrecks or any changes in the sandbanks or the passages you have to trace them over. Fortunately, 'cause my handwriting is so bad, because I'm left-handed, I didn't get the job. I could still be in this Dickensian office in Liverpool. Then I got a job in computers, I could still be doing that. I used to work in a bank, they used to give me a whistle and say, "When they deliver the money, you stand outside and if there's a robbery you blow the whistle." Now, who do you think they shoot first in a bank robbery?

The whistle blower.

Yeah, they shoot the guy with the whistle. Or I could have been any number of other things.

But this is what you wanted to do?

Yeah [laughs], what do you think? This is not all that hard. This is actually very easy, this job. And sometimes it's monotonous: touring can be monotonous and people start to feel very sorry for themselves. It's better than working for anyone is what I think.

I see making records as separate from selling records. I don't feel that my job is over, really, in terms of this record. Like tonight I'm going on television to sing a song from it, then we're going on tour, and we'll play some of the songs. And right now we're talking about what would hopefully be some sort of signpost towards the record, to get people interested. Beyond that it serves no other meaning, except it fills up a magazine, which in itself should be some kind of entertainment, I suppose. When I used to buy them that's what they were. I didn't think it was philosophy. ☺

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Slayer from page 60

their scheme of human existence. Mother Theresa, medical missionaries, help for the homeless. That sort of thing.

"I matter to myself," King commented. "I don't get in anybody else's face if they don't get into mine first."

One thing seemed more sinister than Satanic slogans—the pampered indulgence of the rock lifestyle. Slayer isn't into the megabucks yet. Tours come in several sizes, tour manager Paul Spriggs pointed out: small, medium, large and extra large. Bon Jovi is the giant size. Slayer is medium. But even Slayer's fair-to-middlin' status ain't bad. When they arrive each afternoon at the concert hall for sound checks, delectable goodies are laid out individually in the dressing room. Candies, munchies, fruit and lots of booze. In fact, beer is there all day long, everywhere. Before going onstage, they receive a delivery from the nearest McDonald's. If the devil dwells in cholesterol, these guys have a daily, supernatural french-fry high. After the show, it's a three-course dinner on real china.

I remember John Lennon commenting during his house-husband phase that the hardest thing to cope with after the Beatles' breakup was learning to fend for himself. Now I know what he meant. No member of Slayer on tour ever hails a taxi, arranges for a wake-up call, orders food from a menu, solicits a drink, pays a bill, tunes a guitar, unpacks a road case or makes any serious decision. Takin' care of business is always someone else's job. The result is abject boredom and volitional atrophy. If idle hands are the devil's workshop, Slayer's palms are sweaty with evil.

If Slayer is Satanic, the devil sure has his act down to a science. I never knew occult enchantment could be so choreographed. The fans think Slayer's act onstage is spontaneous combustion, a spark of wicked enthusiasm setting off a firestorm of malevolence. I know better. Every night in every city, the stances and leers were the same. Taped marks on the floor showed them where to stand during each song to maximize "instinctive" showmanship. Each gesture planned in advance, at the right spot, in the right song, on the right beat. If Slayer in concert is oneof Satan's schemes, you'd think Lucifer could at least turn the boys loose once in a while for some unrehearsed debauchery.

Eventually, I found him—you know, the devil. Not in dark occult ceremonies or mysterious lyrics devoted to Lord Satan. And certainly not in the minds of the band members. If you were the devil, would you do the obvious? Of course not. As the King of Deception, his ulterior intent has to be hidden in greed and avarice. I suspect the forbidden brew that Slayer has sipped isn't the drink of lyrical death and despair. It's the elixir of fame, the lure of going platinum. In the Garden of Rock'n'Roll, they are the apple of image over ingenuity, flash over substance, and hype over integrity.

I remember one fan in Bonn, who proudly showed me his T-shirt. He threw open his jacket so I could see the pentagram on the front. It said, "Satan's Army."

That's what these fans think they are. Some elite division of soul slayers, trampling underfoot the heritage of the Fatherland, "Über Alles Evil!" They buy into the band's image and hold Slayer hostage to an idea. Araya and Co. dreamed up seven years ago to get out of their garage and into the LA metal concert scene. Privately, the band members admit it's kind of dumb now and has run its course. But if they change direction, that kid in Satan's Army is going to cry "foul!" and the gig is up. So they keep pasting the same sneers on their faces night after night, looking for ever more

gruesome subject matter to pan off on the ignorant. Slayer doesn't serve Satan. They bow before some juvenile delinquent in Bonn who won't buy their next record if they aren't evil enough.

"The love of money is the root of all evil," the Bible says in 1 Timothy 6:10. Lucifer lurks in Slayer, all right. Not in the stage props and lyrics less graphic than the persona of Freddy Krueger. Black Sabbath said it well albums ago: "We sold our souls for rock'n'roll." Slayer's greatest sin is selling out. They, not their fans, are the victims. These are four generally nice guys and reasonably good musicians.

If the soul of Slayer belongs to Satan, it's not because of bloody rituals in the dark of night. Their root of evil is rock'n'roll stardom. Their pact of iniquity is with the Billboard charts and T-shirt sales. It's only my opinion, but they have the makings of a really great band. They've got the talent, stage presence and moxie to make it. My prayerful mean that literally [is] that both their theatrical and artistic souls will be saved. The spiritual will require an act of God's grace. The musical will need a miracle.

Shakespeare said, "Parting is such sweet sorrow." Not really. But it was more moving than I anticipated. The last night of the tour, I packed my camera and clipboard and started to walk out the dressing room door. Like Lot leaving Sodom, I wasn't so sure I wanted to look back. I was leaving behind a lot that I didn't like. The sweet smell of hash wafting through the bus late at night. The name of the Lord I love profanely expressed. The F-verb, incessantly substituted as an adjective to compensate for lack of linguistic ingenuity.

But there were some things I liked. The camaraderie of guys who were mostly unpretentious in the midst of rock stardom. The honesty of the music, in spite of its lyrical excesses. I even respected Slayer's paradoxical work ethic in the midst of rock'n'roll insanity. I turned back to say goodbye. No, I didn't turn to salt, but for a brief moment my throat did turn to a lump.

"Tell the people we believe in the music, and we believe in the kids," Araya offered in parting. I believed him. The essence of Slayer is in the symbiotic relationship with their fans. Unlike most rock bands who insulate themselves with the peeks of rock'n'roll fame, Slayer mingles with their fans. They take time for autographs, photos and small talk. They want German vermin to know they care about their devotion.

But do small acts of mercy redeem wayward souls?

I'm reminded of a 15-year-old named Jesse I met several months ago. "I hate your God, Jesus Christ," he said. "Satan is my Lord. I sacrifice animals for him. My god is Slayer. It's the words of their music I believe in!" On his right arm, Shae had painted in blood-red the name Slayer. On his left, he etched the words, "Evil Has No Boundaries," the title to a Slayer song.

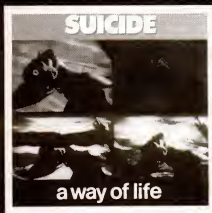
Sure, Shae was screwed up already. Yes, he felt rejected and unloved. OK, so he was looking for reasons to rebel and embrace nihilism. Slayer isn't all at fault. But they were there when Shae needed an excuse to embrace Hate rather than Love. Today, Shae is a Christian, thanks to some compassionate friends. They reached out with unconditional acceptance.

What if Araya and the others care about the kids? What's an hour onstage worth to a teenager, who has been spurned his whole life? Don't the messages of an upside-down cross and the atmosphere of evil say much more? Extremism in the defense of authenticity is no virtue. I'm glad Slayer isn't as bad as their hype purports them to be. But in Germany, land of shameful memories, where Nazi self-interest briefly triumphed, even Hitler made the trains run on time.



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shades, cracked the beers and spent the night bullshitting and discussing strategy, sharing hints for living underground: where to rent mailboxes, where to work off-the-books, where to pick up birth certificates. They traded newly-acquired guns and ammo and clothes for the kids. Linda Coleman, a member who later turned State's witness, was in the room when the plans for two 1975 bank robberies were laid out.

On October 4, 1975, according to Coleman's testimony, Ray and Joey Aceto (an early member who later gave testimony for the prosecution, in exchange for a new identity through the Witness Protection Program, only to return to jail four times and allegedly murder one of his cellmates) went scrambling into the Northeast Bank of Westbrook in Portland, while Coleman waited outside in a stolen car. Wearing ski masks and bulletproof vests, they walked through the front door of the bank with 9mm pistols drawn and put a bank officer, one customer and two tellers on the floor. No one else was in the bank, and an armored car had just pulled out. The safe was still open, but they soon realized they'd made a mistake: "Shit, we hit it on the pickup, not the delivery. There's almost nothing in here." There was only about \$3,600 in the safe.

Ray told everyone to stay on the floor and the two of them backed out of the bank, crossed the lot and jumped into the car, where Linda was waiting. They changed cars in a shopping center parking lot outside of Portland, and Linda drove down to Boston as Ray and Joey covered the money and hid their guns in the car.

Ray, Tom and Carol allegedly hit the Bank of Maine in Augusta two months later, on the morning of December 12, 1975, where they netted \$12,600.

Later, as the United Freedom Front, Ray, Tom, Joan Laaman and Richard Williams allegedly robbed eight more banks—in New Britain, Connecticut, South Burlington, Vermont, Norfolk, Virginia and Onandaga, Ulrica, Rotterdam and Dewitt, New York. They apparently got better at it: the heists grew progressively profitable until they allegedly grabbed almost \$200,000 at their last robbery of the Sovran Bank in Norfolk, on June 5, 1984.

They always met back at the Ramada Inn on the outskirts of Portland to decide what targets to bomb, and whether or not there should be any people in the building when it was done.

In 1974 or '75, they had accumulated some 850 pounds of stolen dynamite and dozens of blasting caps that they kept in a rented storage locker. Their bombs were simple, but effective. They would place anywhere from 6 to 12 sticks of dynamite in a briefcase or a box, with a blasting cap and a 9-volt battery hooked to a Westclox pocket watch to trigger it. The battery was connected to the metal hands of the watch. When the minute hand hit a brass screw in the watchface, the bomb would blow.

When a bomb exploded at the Marin County Courthouse north of San Francisco, in March 1976, the Manning-Lavasseur gang found a name to hang on their new revolutionary selves. The courthouse was the same one where revolutionary martyr George Jackson's 17-year-old brother Jonathan was gunned down attempting to liberate George. The California bombers had called themselves the Sam Melville-Jonathan Jackson Unit, after Jackson and Sam Melville, a white radical who was killed when police took back the Attica state prison in 1971, after a four-day prison revolt.

Continued on next page

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Twenty-two people were injured when the bomb shattered the Suffolk County probation office.



Though they were not in contact with the California bombers, the Ramada Inn group decided to adopt the same name. To celebrate their new identity, they allegedly decided to target a courthouse of their own.

April 22, 1976. Around 8:50 a.m., switchboard operator Katherine Lawless took a call at Boston's Suffolk County Courthouse.

"This is no joke," said a woman's voice. "This is the Sam Melville-Jonathan Jackson Unit. A bomb will go off in the probation office in 20 minutes."

According to new reports, Lawless followed protocol and reported the message to security. They thought she'd been talking to some prankster. The courthouse security reportedly evacuated the judges and some employees, but never closed the building's offices or lobby. They didn't even close off the probation office.

Twenty-two people were injured when the bomb shattered the probation records office, reducing the walls to twisted metal and wood framing and blowing a hole a foot square through the concrete and tile floor.

Edmund Narine, an immigrant from Trinidad living in Brockton, Massachusetts, had been waiting in the probation office to get clearance for a back license, so he could start driving a cab, when the blast hit. He blacked out. He awoke while the dust and debris were still settling to find that his left leg had been blown off just below the knee. His right elbow was shattered. His eye, chest and abdomen were seared.

Two communiques dealing with the Suffolk County Courthouse bombing reached the press. In the first, the SM-IJ claimed responsibility for the destruction and demanded detailed reforms in Massachusetts' prison system, particularly Walpole. The second note came a year later, according to Carol Manning, in the form of a self-critique from the group. In a back-handed apology, the note claimed that there had been too many people in the building and the authorities had failed to heed their warnings.

Of the 15 other bombings credited to the SM-IJ and the UFF (renamed when four new recruits joined their ranks in 1981), the Suffolk County Courthouse bombing was the only one that drew blood. The next explosion claimed by the SM-IJ destroyed part of the Middlesex County Courthouse, in Lowell, Massachusetts, on June 21, 1976. Bombings then continued throughout the state, at the First National Bank of Re-

vere, the W.R. Grace Co. in Marlboro, and the offices of Mobil Oil in Waltham and Wakefield. And one, which failed to explode, at Union Carbide in Needham, on December 12, 1976.

At first, everything the group owned fit into the trunk and back seat of a '71 Dodge. But, as they grew more sophisticated in their use of false ID, and felt more conspicuous as travelers than as community residents, they rented homes and sometimes stayed on in them for years at a time. Federal agents testified that the Mannings and Lavasseurs stayed in Springfield, Dorchester and Revere, Massachusetts; New York's Greenwich Village; Calais, Maine; New Haven, Connecticut; Marshall's Creek and Germantown, Pennsylvania; and Deerfield and Cleveland, Ohio.

In a field behind a big farmhouse suspected to have been abandoned by the Mannings, FBI agents found a pistol and a shooting range, with shell casings from thousands of rounds of high-powered ammo.

The last of the bombings claimed by the SM-IJ hit the Mobil Oil office in Eastchester, New York, on February 27, 1979. Then there was a lull. The SM-IJ disappeared for about three-and-a-half years.

In 1981, Jaan Karl Laaman, Barbara Cruz-Laaman, Richard Charles Williams and Kazi Toure, aka Christopher Everett Williams, and possibly others, joined the Mannings and Lavasseurs to form the United Freedom Front. These new members were by no means new to clandestine political action, but they had not yet developed their own bombing-expropriation skills. The four had been organizers of Boston's Amanda People's Security, an above-ground group of about 40 people who combined their political activism with martial arts training and provided security at political events, concerts and a yearly Hooker's Ball.

The UFF declared war on December 16, 1982, with two bombings of IBM corporate offices in Harrison, New York, and the procurement offices of South African Airways in Elmont, Long Island.

The government threw everything they had at the Ohio Seven. US Attorney General Edwin Meese himself signed their sedition indictment. The FBI began their BOSLUC ("Bo" for Boston, "Luc" for Ray Luc Lavasseur) operation in 1982. BOSLUC was a huge team assembled by the FBI to locate the UFF. The exact number of Feds

involved is still classified. They thought they had the Seven's location pinned down to somewhere in Western Massachusetts in 1983. They were wrong, but Operation Western Sweep was among the finest of the Bureau's fine-tooth combs. It took eight months just to impenal a jury in their current Springfield, Massachusetts, sedition trial because one in three people in that half of the state had already been contacted by the FBI.

The Lavasseurs and Mannings discovered pictures of their children posing with automatic weapons that were obviously fabricated and circulated by the FBI. Grumman reportedly donated the use of a mainframe computer for the operation. The FBI's Joint Terrorist Task Force office in New York coordinated the BOSLUC movements and were in contact with practically every law enforcement office in the Northeast.

Tom and Carol Manning and their three children, Jeremy, then 11, Tamara, 4, and Jonathan, 3, were captured at their secluded home in Norfolk, Virginia, on April 24, 1985.

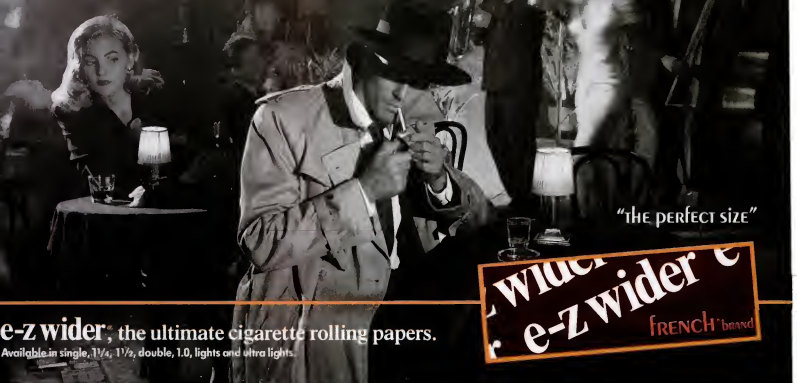
The Sedition Act, originally known as the Alien and Sedition Act, makes it illegal to conspire to disobey the laws or policies of the US Government, and a conviction carries a maximum sentence of 20 years. The same Act was used to jail the International Workers of the World—IWW or "Wobblies"—during the 1920s, and to imprison and deport American socialists like Eugene V. Debs and anarchist Jack Emma Goldman and Alex Berkman during World War I.

The 1970 Racketeering Influenced and Corrupt Organizations Act—RICO—is a series of statutes which criminalize an entire network of people who are "associated in fact," when two or more crimes are committed by someone in the group. The act of being in the circle is punishable by 20 years in prison. Though RICO was meant to nail the Mafia, it has since become a legal machine gun held to the heads of political organizers, drug dealers, and insider-traders on Wall Street.

"It's the big stick and the carrot," muses Ray, in detention in Hartford, Connecticut. "If you want to fuckin' eat the carrot and behave a certain way, alright. If you don't, then it's the big stick. We keep tellin' people: you can sit back on your ass and say that you ain't got nothin' in common with us—and I'm talkin' about ketties—but really they're testing the waters for further prosecutions after this."

Raymond Luc Lavasseur, 42, is serving 45 years for bombing and conspiracy at Marion Federal Penitentiary, in Illinois. Thomas Manning, 42, got 53 years for bombing and conspiracy and is also serving two 30-year terms and a life sentence in Trenton State Prison for the 1981 shooting death of New Jersey State Trooper Phil Lamomaco on Interstate 80. Jaan Laaman, 40, got 53 years for bombing and is serving 45 years at Leavenworth, in Kansas, for attempted murder during a shootout with police at a highway rest area near North Attleboro, Massachusetts, in 1981. Richard Charles Williams, 42, received 45 years for bombing and conspiracy and is in federal detention in Hartford, Connecticut. Patricia Gros Lavasseur, 40, received five years for harboring a fugitive and possession of false ID, and is on restricted bail in Northampton, Massachusetts. Carol Ann Manning, 33, is serving 15 years for bombing and conspiracy, five years for RICO enterprise, five years for RICO conspiracy and two years for sedition, concurrently, in Marianna, Florida. Barbara Laaman, 31, is serving 15 years for bombing and conspiracy in Pleasanton, California.

THE FRENCH side of life



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Eno from page 42

anything. They're ways of telling yourself stories, then being able to use the story as a way to project your present reality.

"An oracle presents a scheme. Say it divides your life into four parts—spiritual, emotional, sexual and physical. Just presenting you with that scheme suggests that you might look at your life through those categories. These things are matrices which allow you to organize this whole flurry of impressions and desires and disappointments that go around inside you.

"What I think happens with dreams is that a story is told to you by your brain and you wake up with certain impressions which you try to work out. 'Who was that that was threatening me?' 'What does that mean?' You're actually asking yourself important questions that you would never ask of your own accord.

"To use an oracle system, you don't have to believe it's true, you just have to suspend what I call the Martin Gardner sense. I hate that man, he's become one of the leading anti-psychic research people. I can't stick all these people who are into the occult either, but there's now this group of scientists who spend all their time trying to prove how useless and unscientific and wrong it is. It might be wrong—but it isn't useless. That's the point.

"These people can only see two categories of reality, they are hard fact and useless myth. What I'm trying to say is that there's another category which is in fact what we spend most of our lives doing, which is working on half-formed feelings, bits of information, whatever we can put together at the time. But that's a technique we don't tend to acknowledge. Whereas scientists are valued as being people who present serious information, storytellers aren't.

"They are in the Soviet Union. That's why the government for such a long time controlled literature more than any other medium, because it recognized the power of storytellers."

In spite of fiction's strength, Eno's list of favorite books includes no fiction whatsoever. Instead he regards the architect and theorist Christopher Alexander whose concern, one close to Eno's heart, is the anti-human nature of most modern architecture.

"I like the West Coast architects because they don't have such ideas of themselves, they acknowledge that an audience does at least exist, whereas a lot of modern architects don't even do that. Often the sense of the whole thing is that what has been constructed is something that looked good on a drawing.

"But what architecture has done that really pisses me off is remove the process of building from people. There's a character called Bernard Rudofsky who did a tremendous book called *Architecture Without Architects*, which is about vernacular architecture throughout the world. It shows solutions that have evolved to various problems of climate and materials. They are so brilliant and elegant, you just clap your hands to look at these things. Then when you look at the pathetic, leaden-footed work that most architects are doing, you just think 'What a bunch of middle-class prats! Why don't they just look at what's been done?' These millennia of building practices have been ignored. It's just so annoying. These people are supposed to be intelligent."

Eno has one long-cherished project called the Quiet Space, effectively a kind of club which instead of speeding up the rate of stimulation of the outside world, slows it down. It has already been partly realized by a group of psychologists in Germany, inspired by Eno's idea.

"It's not open all the time—they put a week or two-week program together every so often, during which time they have a lot of discussions about things like the nature of time and human perception of time. The guy who runs it told me he delivered a talk, but he did it at one twentieth of human speed. I'd love to have seen that!

Another of Eno's favorite books is *Travels In Hyper-Reality*, a theoretical work by post-structuralist Umberto Eco, author of *The Name Of The Rose*.

"That book is very funny in the sense that having read it, you look at things with a certain lightness. So all these things that seem so threatening, like the burger empires taking over the world, and Coca-Cola owning CBS, and the world being governed by trash, suddenly seem like such a joke. Everyone was scared of Big Brother, it turns out that Big Mac is the one that's dominating the world."

Because of his constant change, vast explorations and sometimes bizarre pursuits, I feel compelled to ask, "Is Brian Eno a charlatan?"

"Funny thing about charlatanism," he says, "it rather implies that you force people to accept your work. Suppose what I do is of no value whatsoever—boring, stupid, regressive—what does it matter? Nobody has to buy my records, nobody has to pay me any attention at all. I'm not a government minister or a doctor or a surgeon that people are depending on.

"A charlatan is somebody who claims to be something they're not. What do I claim to be? Nothing other than somebody who does what I do, which is patently true. I present my things and if people are interested I'm very pleased. If they're not I'll present something else, or just continue doing what I'm doing and they still won't be interested. It really doesn't matter."

My Satanic Verses

Fugitive's diary by John Leland

The Chinese kid downstairs just brought up my provisions for the day: a loaf of black bread, two cans of corned beef hash, a joint, a can of coffee grounds and the latest issue of *Model magazine*, with Cindy Crawford on the cover. He took a risk bringing them here, so I gave him twice their street value, plus one of the .38 cartridges I've been saving for a rainy day. I've still got a couple left, and one, if it comes down to it, for myself. Before he left, I gave him this manuscript to bring to Bob. "Not as good as last month's," the kid said, after skimming it. "Needs more models." Every time he leaves, I search his face and wonder idly whether this will be the day he sells me out.

You see, the Ayatullah Khomeini has put a \$5 million bounty on my head because of my Nick Cave article. Among the incense vendors of New York, I am now the most hated man in the city.

Through the battered venetian blinds I see the kid dart lithely along the drizzly Chinatown streets, and again I hear the evil chanting from below. By now the sound has become so familiar that I barely hear it, like some kind of sinister muzak, but it still registers as raw menace. The demonstrators, with their signs reading *\$MONEY IS THE ROOT OF SATANIC CAVE VERSES* and *EGG SONIC YOUTH EQUAL TIME*, barely look up as the kid goes by; I know they are the enemy, but deep down I covet their excellent scarves. I light the joint and etch a stroke on the wall to mark another day's passing; it's been three months now, and my strokes are beginning to take the shape of a skeleton. Far hovers outside my window like the Underdog float at the Macy's parade.

Life hasn't been easy since the Ayatullah put the bounty on my head. (Actually, Khomeini only offered \$4,500,000; SPIN's circulation manager kicked in the last half a mill when he realized Cave was going on the cover.) Holed up in an unheated warehouse six flights over an imitation gulf dookie rope retailer, with only the occasional visits of Pasquale (not his real name) and 60 cases of bootleg designer ledies to keep me company, I contemplate, through cheap spectacle effects, the dangerous past that got me here. Calendar pages spin really fast, making it hard to think. The room's scalded walls flicker with amber light as a luminous dragon on the electronic billboard outside explodes into the legend, *HAPPY NEW YEAR. LET'S GO*



METS. MORTGAGES FROM 9.75%. Three months of this. Still, not a bad rate. I take a last hit and snuff the joint; I'll need it later to hold off the nightmares. You would too, if you had a giant Underdog float hovering outside your window.

This isn't the first time I've been threatened by a world leader. Far from it. A lot of Joes think being a rock critic is soft work, that we just collect our free records and take our turns at being "special friends" with Bebe Buell. Well, never judge a man until you've typed "blistering fretboard pyrotechnics" on his word processor. For starters, we almost never get drugs and blowjobs from record company publicists who want favors. Beyond that, the life of a rock critic is one of wanton violence. My girl Friday dodges more pipe bombs in a week than the average \$60-a-day clerk does in a lifetime. By now she considers it sport.

We all remember our first time. We couldn't forget it if we wanted to. Mine was in '52. I was just a kid, coming out of Korea with a hop habit and a SPIN cover story assignment on Sammy Davis Jr. Back then, Sammy was the counterulture. When the story came out, it turned out I'd misspelled "eponymously." Canadian Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau, a

stickler for this sort of thing, put a \$600 bounty on my hand. (These were terrorism's early experimental days, and there was a lot of trial and error; the Southern Pacific railway once put a buck eighty-five contract out on Glen O'Brien's table lamp.) A lot of Canadians got hurt trying to collect that bounty. To this day, whenever I hear the Canadian national anthem I think of handsome Michel and the chess game we played before I bludgeoned him to death with one of Bob's editorials.

Afterwards I was shaken and wanted to quit the business, maybe sell shoes or scout talent for the Ford Modeling Agency. Robert Christgau, dean of American rock critics, comforted me, explaining that it was all part of the game. He showed me the natches on his typewriter, each denoting a would-be assassin who was now taking up valuable cemetery space. His typewriter looked like the inside of a crocodile's mouth. He offered to show me pictures of himself naked with the skater Sonya Henie, but I passed.

In December of '64 I was holed up in a fleabag LA motel called the Hacienda, ducking a team of extremist Flemish hit men outraged by my allegedly blasphemous profile of Wayne Newton. I beat

their tail all over town, but they finally caught up with the night manager, Bertha Franklin, and greased her for the job. Bertha was a nice dish but a lousy shot; she squeezed her .22 three times, and missed me with all three. As fate would have it, the three slugs passed through the hollow wall and into Sam Cooke, who happened to be staying in the same motel. Stunned by the sudden pain in his shirt, he said, "Lady, you shot me," and checked out for good. (This pattern would recur throughout my life. Two years ago Debbie Gibson's mother hired a couple of strongarms to throw acid in my face; the acid missed me but hit my friend Sting, searing all the hair from the top of his head. To this day, Sting wears nonprescription safety glasses for fear someone will throw acid in his eyes.)

I give Bob a lot of credit for publishing the Cave piece, knowing the controversy it would cause. Waldenbooks, for example, the nation's largest bookstore chain, has pulled the issue from its shelves to protect its employees against terrorism. As Bonnie Predd, the chain's executive vice president, put it, "We've fought long and hard against censorship. But when it comes to the safety of our employees, one sometimes has to compromise." Ironically, Waldenbooks offered to stock the condom issue in its stead.

Demonstrators picket outside the office daily, protesting that the Cave article blasphemes both Robert Johnson and the Prophet. Six people have already died in riots outside the American cultural center in Islamabad, the capital of Pakistan. The SPIN staff members wonder when the violence is going to close in on them; the magazine can't afford to lose another art director.

As a favor to Bob, and to Pasquale (not his real name), I've already declared in public how much "I profoundly regret the distress that publication has occasioned to sincere followers of Islam," but it hasn't done any good. Even Cat "Peace Train" Stevens wants to see crows pick at my bones. I'm still on the lam, chasing cockroaches around a dumpier Chinatown warehouse. Just the other day, Georges Sabagh, director of the Near East Studies Center at UCLA, said the Ayatullah was "completely within his rights" to call for my death. "If the man is struck by a thunderbolt," he said, "all the better."

I look outside. There's lightning in the dull gray sky; better stay away from any large metal objects. I change into a clean teddy, smoke the rest of the joint and listen to the swing beat of a prostitute's heels clicking on the wet pavement below. A tenor sax blows breathy nothing through the soggy air. I pose broodingly in the hard, striated light piercing through the venetian blinds. In the end, it's the posing that makes it all worthwhile. Fade to black.


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A woman with dark hair, wearing a black fedora, a large tan trench coat over a black top, and a matching tan skirt. She is leaning against a dark vertical frame, possibly a door or window, with her right arm raised and hand behind her head. She is looking towards the camera with a slight smile.

“He’s flying in on the red-eye
just for my party.
And he drinks Johnnie Walker.”

Good taste is always an asset.



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